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THE NEW COVENANT OF JEREMIAH 31:31-34 IN ITS BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL SETTING

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 to provide some answers to the basic questions of the relationships between the testaments. It seeks to understand (a) what was to be the nature of the new covenant; (b) the significance of the new covenant for the continuing relevance of the other biblical covenants; and (c) how the Old Testament data concerning (a) and (b) might be correlated consistently with the relevant New Testament data.

As an exegetical study, much attention is devoted to Jeremiah 31:31-34. Yet the previous covenants between Yahweh and his people, the condition of Israel under the Mosaic covenant, the promises for Israel's future associated with the new covenant and some basic New Testament data are examined for their contribution to better understanding of the new covenant prophecy.

It is concluded that the new covenant was to be a type of promissory covenant, but more gracious. It was to provide for a new internalization of the law and new obedience for Israel, with a new permanent fellowship with Yahweh. It was to be based on a new enduring forgiveness. It was to be the means for the full realization of the promises of the previous covenants. This new covenant was inaugurated by the work of Christ. Its associated promises are to be fully realized on his return.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

On the broadest level this thesis addresses the question, What is the relationship of the Old Testament to the New? This question elicits a number of answers reflecting ideas that range from belief that the Old Testament presents an immoral religion inferior to that of the New to the concept that such a unity exists between the two testaments that even development in the history of redemption is scarcely recognized. The thesis works within the Reformed tradition in which both Old and New Testaments are understood to be the word of God of equal inspiration.[1] Yet there is a proper recognition of development within the history of redemption which they record and of which their production is a part. Therefore the principle of continuity with development with respect to the relationship between the testaments is a basic premise of this thesis.

Even with such a commitment the problem of the more exact definition of the relationship between the testaments remains and awareness of this becomes acute when having to preach from the Old Testament. It is then that questions arise, such as, Was the salvation of the Old Testament saints

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[1] See The Belgic Confession, Articles III - V; The Westminster Confession of Faith, I:II.

the same as that of their New Testament counterparts? If it differed, was this in degree or in kind? If either of these, in what ways? And all these questions stem from the practical question, How can the salvation experiences of those of the Old Testament be meaningful for those living after Christ? Between the Old Testament saint and the twentieth century Christian there appears to be a gulf fixed which is not merely temporal and cultural but also soteriological.

Purpose of the Study

The New Testament appears to speak of a "new covenant" as being operative in its age, the period from Christ on. Although the term is used only once in the Old Testament, it is repeated explicitly, and also its presence is implied, in a number of places in the New Testament. Therefore as a way of providing basic data for answering the questions posed above and of constructing a framework for understanding the relationship between Old and New Testaments this thesis seeks to determine what was to be new about the new covenant according to Jeremiah 31:31-34, the passage in the Old Testament where the term appears. It is reasonable to believe that some useful data relating to the problems posed could be found in an examination of a passage in which a contrast between an Old Testament situation and one which was later reckoned to be New Testament one was presented. This at least should give a fair representation of an Old Testament answer to the question of continuity and difference between the Testaments. Also it should give useful background to what the New Testament itself

says about those who live in the new covenant age, since the passage from Jeremiah is taken up so obviously in the New Testament in characterizing its proclamation and in its contrasting of its benefits of its era with those of the period before Christ. This is not to say that the understanding of the New Testament will not go beyond that of the Old, nor is it presupposing that the writers of the New Testament were using grammatico-historical exegesis when they referred to this passage. But it is presupposing that the messages of both testaments, as those given by the Holy Spirit, will be harmonious and that, therefore, a proper understanding of what Jeremiah 31:31-34 meant in its Old Testament context will throw light on its usage in the New Testament.

Since the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is to be considered, the nature of the relationship between Yahweh and his people before the proclamation of the new covenant, also presented as a covenantal one, will have to be examined. The message of Jeremiah did not stand in a religious vacuum and the term "covenant" used in the passage had meaning only in relation to what had been previously said concerning "covenant". Therefore an examination of what a covenant was and what different types were used in the biblical period is important for understanding the significance of the new covenant prophecy. More specifically, it is important to examine the Mosaic covenant with which the new was being contrasted and which was to be rendered old by it, and how this previous covenant had operated and was operating in the life of Israel, Yahweh's people with whom the new covenant was

to be made. Furthermore, since the relationship between Yahweh and his people had been defined by other covenants, those with Abraham, Phinehas and David, the relationship between these, the Mosaic and the new covenant must be examined.

The purpose of the study, then, is to examine the biblical data most directly related to the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 as it stood in the context of the Old Testament covenants and in relation to later New Testament usage. Such study is to seek to understand (a) what Jeremiah said was to be the nature of the new covenant, especially what was to be new about it; (b) the significance of this new covenant arrangement for the continuing relevance of the other covenants for Yahweh's people; and (c) how the Old Testament data concerning (a) and (b) might be correlated consistently with that of the New Testament which spoke of "new covenant."

Limitations of the Study

The lines of inquiry connected with a study of the new covenant are many and the problems legion. Therefore this study has severe limitations in its scope in order that more attention might be concentrated on specific issues.

The study is not an examination of all the Old Testament passages that relate to the future condition of God's people. The primary focus is the data of Jeremiah with other passages considered as they are deemed to throw light on the meaning of that prophet. The book of Jeremiah is to be reckoned as the first context of the oracle of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and as such it is of first importance. Also what Jeremiah

said, although not identical with them, can be taken as representative of what other prophets revealed about those matters connected with the new covenant.

Even with respect to the material of Jeremiah, the thesis is not meant to be an exhaustive commentary on the whole book nor even on all the passages within it which relate to the future condition of Israel. The book of Jeremiah, although intriguing, is most complex and dealing with its material would be a formidable task. The focus of the thesis, therefore, is on the exegesis of 31:31-34, with the other material of Jeremiah taken as context for this, either as the new covenant oracle points to the Mosaic covenant and Israel under it or to a new era and Israel's new condition in it.

While the study seeks to understand Jeremiah 31:31-34 in a biblical theological context, it does not and cannot present a comprehensive outline of a biblical theology. Yet it is believed that the study does deal, at least in summary, with a core element for a faithful biblical theology, since it focuses on the covenants, from those with Abraham to the new covenant,which regulated or were to regulate the relationship between Yahweh and his people.

The study does not examine thoroughly all of the New Testament data on the new covenant but only presents that New Testament material necessary to show that the belief that the period from Christ on has been that in which the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 has been operative is consistent with the New Testament witness and that conclusions drawn concerning the new covenant and its relationship to the other Old Test-

ament covenants are consistent with the basic picture presented in the New Testament. Hence, although making some suggestion in this area, the study does not dwell on the difficulties of understanding the New Testament data which contrasts old and new covenants in terms of the antithesis between law and gospel, letter and spirit, bondage and freedom.

Finally, space and time have not permitted any extensive consideration of the various schools of eschatological thought, especially those of the dispensationalist tradition which limit the application of the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 to an ethnic Israel of the future.[2] Just the same, it is believed that this study does lay a foundation of principles from which a fruitful examination of various understandings of the application of the new covenant prophecy, including the dispensational, can be carried out.

Chapter Overview

Following the Introduction, Chapter II examines the nature and inter-relationships of the covenants prior to Jeremiah. The Mosaic covenant is set in its cultural context and, as an obligatory covenant, is distinguished from the promissory type. Its recognition by Jeremiah is observed. Then the relationships between the obligations of the Mosaic covenant

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[2] Dwight Pentecost, after considering differing dispensational views on the relationship of the church to the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, concludes,

> "Regardless of the relationship of the church to the new covenant as explained in these three views, there is one general point of agreement: the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 must and can be fulfilled only by the nation of Israel and not by the church" (Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology, intro. by John F. Walvoord (Findlay, OH: Dunham Publishing Co., 1958), p.124).

and the promises of the covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David, as well as those of the Mosaic covenant itself, is determined. Finally, the condition of Israel under the Mosaic covenant is outlined as background to the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Chapter III seeks an understanding of the new covenant by a re-examination, through translation and syntactical analysis, of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah 31:31-34. The new-ness of the new covenant is isolated, first, by recognizing those features it shared with the Mosaic and how some under that covenant had experienced new covenant realities. The prophecy is examined further in the connection with previous adumbrations of its message. Finally, the revelation of its unbreakable character and the reasons for this are presented as the main aspects of the message of the pericope.

The connection of the new covenant prophecy with the the "Book of Consolation" and elsewhere in Jeremiah, as well as the links between these promises and those of the previous covenants, are presented in Chapter IV. Then the logical relationship between the new covenant and promise realization is determined. Finally, how the New Testament witnessed to the inauguration of the new covenant in the work of Jesus Christ, yet also pointed to the fact that the promises were only to be fully realized at his return, is outlined.

In Chapter V general conclusions concerning the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 in its biblical theological context are presented. Also a number of suggestions for further study are presented.

Unless otherwise noted, the translations of biblical passages are original.

CHAPTER II

THE MOSAIC COVENANT - CONTRAST OF THE NEW

Introduction

Starting with a discussion of the term b^{e}rît, this chapter seeks its meaning as used in the Old Testament. Considering the Old Testament in its ancient Near Eastern setting, the distinction between parity and suzerainty treaties is examined and , in spite of some scholarly dissent, how the Mosaic covenant reflected the latter type of treaty form. The further distinction between obligatory and promissory covenants is considered and how this distinction was reflected in the biblical covenants which defined the relationship between Yahweh and his people. Evidence in the Pentateuch and in Jeremiah for the obligatory nature of the Mosaic covenant is presented, as this covenant was the one contrasted with the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34. Also the relationship between the promises of the promissory covenants and the fulfillment of obligation, especially that detailed in the Mosaic covenant, is discussed as well as the record of Israel's performance as presented in representative passages outside Jeremiah and in the prophecy itself.

The aim of the chapter is to discover the nature of the Mosaic covenant, the contrast of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, and of those with Abraham, Phinehas and David, the relationship between the fulfillment of the obligations of the former and the realization of the promises of the latter group and the quality of the fulfillment of the obligations by the people of Yahweh under the Mosaic covenant as background to understanding the significance of the prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The Nature of the Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant as a Suzerainty Treaty

In his article in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, J. A. Thompson outlines the use and meaning of the term $b^{e}r\hat{i}t$ in the Old Testament.[1] In many ways the Old Testament reflected the treaty-making situation of the Ancient Near East, which was its cultural context. In the ancient world agreements between men sometimes took the form of treaties by which the parties committed themselves to each other. These were not merely secular arrangements since they usually included religious sanctions and witnessing by the gods. Both "parity" and "suzerainty" treaties have been found among international treaties. The former were made between parties of equal status while the latter were between overlords and their vassals. The Hittite suzerainty treaties of the second millenium BC give the best, although not only, examples of this type of agreement. Such a treaty placed a vassal under

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[1] International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979 ed., s.v. "Covenant (OT)," by J. Arthur Thompson.

perpetual obligation to his overlord in consequence of the latter's past acts on behalf of the vassal. An account of these acts was presented in an historical prologue to the treaty. Conditions were set out in the treaty and these were accepted by the vassal on oath. If the conditions were broken curses from the gods were to operate. These treaties were sealed by the slaughter of an animal, which most likely symbolized the expected fate of the one who should break the agreement. It was this suzerainty treaty form which, according to Thompson, characterized much of the covenant relationships between Yahweh and Israel in the Old Testament.

The term b^{e}rît in the Old Testament did not refer exclusively to the suzerainty type of treaty, but had a wide range of application when speaking of arrangements between man and man. It could be used to speak of the agreement between individuals, as that between David and Jonathan (1 Sam.18:3; 20:8; 23:18), or could refer to the relationship between nations, whether as equals, as with Israel and Tyre (1 Kgs. 5:12), or as the dominant to the vassal, as with Babylon and Judah (Ezek.17:3). In all Thompson lists eleven categories of b^{e}rît types evidenced in the Old Testament and regulating the relationships between men. These, in varying degrees, exhibit features of the general Ancient Near Eastern treaty pattern including stipulations, oath taking, blessing and curses, witnesses and the treaty being "cut," a technical term for making a covenant reflecting the animal-slaying ceremony which was so often associated with the formalization of a treaty.

In the light of this wide range of reference for the term b^{e}rît, Thompson's basic definition of it as "that which bound two parties together" is seen to be sound.[2]

In dealing with the nature of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, Thompson sees the suzerainty treaty as the paradigm, thus reflecting the well-known thesis of G. Mendenhall.[3] He says that "the suzerainty treaty provided a monarchical picture in which God became Israel's sovereign and Israel became his servant."[4] He sees a number of features of the suzerainty treaty present in the account of the establishment of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel at Sinai in Exodus 19-24. These include historical recital (19:4), stipulations (in the Decalogue and chapters 21-23), oathtaking (19:8; 24:3), and curses and blessings (in the Decalogue in 20:5-7, 12), accompanied by religious ratification ceremony (24:4-8) and the presence of a covenant document (24:7). This suzerainty treaty pattern, as defining the b^{e}rît-relationship between Yahweh and Israel, is also seen in other places, especially Deuteronomy[5] and Joshua 23-24. That the covenant between Yahweh and Israel was of the suzerainty treaty type is also supported by the language used of the actions of the two

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[2] Ibid.

[3] For a summary and critique of Mendenhall's position see Dennis J. McCarthy, "Covenant in the Old Testament: the Present State of the Inquiry," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 27 (1965): 219-30.

[4] International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, s.v. "Covenant (OT)."

[5] See Peter C. Cragie, The Book of Deuteronomy, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), pp.20-24.

parties. Yahweh was the one taking the initiative in the relationship to establish, grant, set down or command the b^{e}rît. Israel, as vassal, was expected to obey, keep, remember, do and walk in it. There was no mutuality of arrangement but rather the imposition of the framework for the relationship from the greater to the lesser party. This was the nature of the Sinai covenant, but this suzerainty treaty pattern is seen by Thompson as being reflected also in the covenants with Noah, Abraham and David.

The understanding of the Sinai covenant as based on the suzerainty treaty pattern, as presented by Thompson, has been questioned by Dennis J. McCarthy. He writes, "Investigation of the events and documents of Sinai (Ex 19-34) seems to show little or nothing of the literary form of the covenant."[6] McCarthy says that the oldest Exodus material, which gives the most authentic or historically most reliable information about the Sinai covenant, does not reflect the suzerainty treaty pattern. Pentateuchal data, especially in Deuteronomy, may contain the suzerainty treaty form but, because of supposed chronological distance from the events at Sinai, such data is reckoned as a later and biased construction not giving an accurate picture of the events of Sinai. It was only later that the Mosaic covenant was presented in suzerainty treaty form. So McCarthy speaks of the texts which, in describing the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, presented the treaty form clearly as "relatively late" or as being "connected with the Deuteronomic school or at least related to it

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[6] "Covenant in the Old Testament," p.230.

stylistically."[7] Thus the original Mosaic covenant was not a suzerainty treaty between Yahweh, the great king, and Israel, his vassal.

Now it is true that the suzerainty treaty form as a whole is not as clear in Exodus as in other parts of the Pentateuch and McCarthy's discussion alerts to this fact. The Exodus account does not reflect the treaty pattern as clearly as Deuteronomy,[8] for example, although the evidence for the various treaty elements in Exodus, as presented by Thompson,

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[7] Ibid., p.230.

[8] McCarthy, while not accepting the clear presence of the treaty form in the Sinai covenant, can still say that "there can be no doubt that Dt does show some kind of relationship to the literary form of the treaties" ("Covenant in the Old Testament," p. 229). The book of Deuteronomy as a whole can be analysed as a suzerainty treaty as follows:

1. Preamble: 1:1-5
2. Historical Prologue: 1:6-4:49
3. Stipulations: 5:1-26:19
   A. The Great Commandment: 5:1-11:32
   B. Ancillary Commandments: 12:1-26:19
4. Sanctions: 27:1-30:20
5. Dynastic Disposition: 31:1-34:12

(adapted from Meredith Kline, The Treaty of the Great King (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), pp. 48-9).

Thompson, in a later discussion, presents an analysis of Deuteronomy according to a unique Old Testament covenant form as postulated by G. J. Wenham, resembling, but not identical with, the suzerainty treaty form (Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1974), pp.18-9). He also notes Weinfeld's belief that the material of Deuteronomy has been reworked to follow a later Assyrian treaty form (Ibid., p.20). He does not clearly decide for either of these options.

P. C. Craigie, in a balanced evaluation of the evidence from a conservative position, views the Sinai covenant as a suzerainty treaty. He says,

> "The Hebrews adopted the treaty form for their own use in order to express the nature of their relationship to God . . . . (T)hey . . . submitted themselves in the Sinai covenant to become vassals of God, the one who had liberated them from Egypt" (The Book of Deuteronomy, p.23).

Cragie leans heavily towrds viewing Deuteronomy as being structured according to the suzerainty treay pattern (Ibid., p.24).

is suggestive of the suzerainty treaty background. Of course presuppositions about the nature of the Pentateuchal material are significant in determining conclusions about the presence or absence of the suzerainty treaty form in the Sinai covenant. It appears that McCarthy's evaluation of the Exodus material, and of that of the Pentateuch as a whole, is heavily influenced by source criticism. Therefore much of the evidence which might argue for the fact that the original Sinai covenant was in a treaty form is excluded because it is reckoned late. McCarthy's purpose is not to articulate a comprehensive view of the covenant as presented in the Pentateuch but to present that concept of the covenant as evidenced in what are considered to be the oldest sources of the Pentateuch.[9] While not wanting to make stronger claims for the presence or significance of the treaty form in the Pentateuch than warranted, this paper reflects the presupposition that the Pentateuch as whole accurately portrays the Mosaic period and the Mosaic covenant as delivered at Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab. If the whole Pentateuchal evidence for the b^{e}rît between Yahweh and Israel is considered then the Mosaic covenant does reflect the suzerainty treaty pattern. As the contrast of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, it was this Mosaic covenant which was spoken of as "the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the

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[9] Of course it is likely that McCarthy would question the validity of even making a synthesis of the Pentateuchal material on covenant if this is reckoned to stem from a number of sources, disparate in both time and theological perspective.

hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt . . . ." (Jer.31:32).[10]

Obligatory and Promissory Covenants

Thompson has shown that the term b^{e}rît had a wide semantic range and may be basically defined as "that which bound two parties together." T. E. McComiskey holds that the "basic idea underlying the concept of b^{e}rît is that of relationship involving obligation", and this is in harmony with Thompson's definition, although refining it somewhat.[11] Also with Thompson he agrees that b^{e}rît has a broad range of connotations when he says,

> The application of the term b^{e}rît to an eternally valid oath as well as a covenant that could be broken reflects the broad conceptual range of the word. It is wrong to limit its meaning too narrowly.[12]

Helpfully in his discussion McComiskey distinguishes three basic functions of the term b^{e}rît: (a) "to connote an oath apart from any condition" (e.g. Gen.9:9; 2 Sam.7), (b) "the formal crystalization of terms of mutual agreement (Gen.21:27, 32; 26:28-29; 1 Kings 5:12)" and (c) "to denote a statement of unilateral intent which involves the stipulations of obedience

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[10] Even if the material as presented in Deuteronomy is considered late its perspective on the covenant can still be taken as part of the background for the message of Jeremiah since that book reflects so much Deuteronomic language and thought pattern. For the arguments for an early date for Deuteronomy see P. C. Cragie, Deuteronomy, pp.24-32.

[11] T. E. McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), p.63.

[12] Ibid., p.63.

by which that intent is formalized and facilitated" (e.g. Josh.24).[13]

The second of the functions defined by McComiskey is equivalent to that of the "parity" treaty. The "parity" treaty only appeared in the Old Testament in relationships between humans and so this connotation of the term b^{e}rît did not appear in connection with the relationship between Yahweh and his people. The first and third of the functions of the term b^{e}rît are found in connection with those agreements regulating the relationships between God and man. Since b^{e}rît involved obligation, the relationship between God and man involved obligation which was "expressed in the form of intent" but which "intent may be effected unilaterally or bi-laterally."[14] It appears from his discussion that it is in McComiskey's first function of b^{e}rît that the intent was effected unilaterally, while in the second bi-laterally.

This distinction between types of b^{e}rît in the Yahweh-Israel relationship is useful and is a distinction not clearly made by Thompson, although a necessary one for a more exact understanding of the nature of biblical covenants and the relationships between them. McComiskey's discussion reflects a distinction between promissory and obligatory covenants based on a discussion by M. Weinfeld.[15] Certainly the Mosaic covenant can be recognized as having the features of a

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[13] Ibid., pp.62-63.

[14] Ibid., p.63.

[15] M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," Journal of the American Oriental Society 90 (1970):184-203.

suzerainty treaty with its emphasis on the obligations of the vassal and where intent is effected bi-laterally. The Mosaic covenant will be considered as such a b^{e}rît in this paper. But other covenants, such as those with Abraham, Phinehas and David, while still being imposed uni-laterally by Yahweh, differed from the suzerainty treaty form in that no conditions were attached to them, the only obligation being expressed as that of Yahweh.

Moshe Weinfeld, in his article, directs attention particularly to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, showing that they had many features in common with "royal grants" found throughout the Ancient Near East. These "royal grants" were distinct from suzerainty treaties, the features of which have been outlined above. Although the "royal grant" shared a number of features in common with the suzerainty treaty form, such as historical introduction, border delineations, stipulations, witnesses, blessings and curses, it primarily obligated the master to the servant, especially in guaranteeing the servant's continuing enjoyment of the grant. This was unlike the suzerainty treaty in which the servant's or vassal's obligations were stressed as conditions for the continued benevolence of his overlord.

"Royal grants" were made to those who excelled in loyal service. John Stek notes that "the grant itself was an act of royal benevolence arising from the king's desire to reward his loyal servant for good deeds or services already performed."[16] Weinfeld points out that such loyalty is

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[16] John H. Stek, The Former Prophets: A Syllabus ([Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary], 1985), p.87

mentioned as a motivation for the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.26:5, cf. 22:16, 18; 15:6) and for the Davidic (1 Kgs.3:6, cf. 9:4; 11:4, 6; 14:8; 15:3). The same should be recognised for the covenant with Phinehas (Num.25:1-13). The terminology used in the biblical grant covenants with Abraham and David was similar to that used in "royal grants" of Assyria, Ugarit, Susa and Elephantine and serves to indicate further the identity of the covenant type.[17] In both the biblical and extra-biblical examples of the grant, land and house (dynasty), given unconditionally, were prominent.[18] Furthermore, the gift was at times given in perpetuity, even if some fault were found later in the recipient. So, for instance, in the Davidic covenant Yahweh says,

> I will raise up your descendant after you . . . I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the strokes of men, but my loving kindness shall not depart from him . . . ." (2 Sam.7:14-15).

Further, it appears that in the ancient Near East the allotment of a fiefdom, as in the case of the Davidic covenant, could be legalized by adoption.[19] Sonship then was a legal fiction to establish the grant of dynasty. Since, in the ancient Near East, adopting parents could disinherit disobedient sons,[20] it was a special privilege, perhaps for exceptionally loyal service, for it to be stated that a grant

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(emphasis his).

[17] M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant," pp.185-8.

[18] Ibid., p.189.

[19] Ibid., p.191

[20] Ibid., p.193.

was not to be cancelled even if the recipients were later rebellious. Again these ideas can be seen reflected in the words of the Davidic covenant given above. Sonship was established between Yahweh and David and his offspring and disobedience would not bring disinheritance by Yahweh. Considering these parallels between "royal grants" and the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants Weinfeld states:

> The gift of land to Abraham and the gift of kingship to David are then formulated in the way Hittite grants used to be formulated and especially those bestowed upon privileged vassals. Contrary to the prevalent law in the Hittite kingdom, in Ugarit and in Alalaḫ, according to which the property of the condemned is to be confiscated, in the cited documents the property of the condemned cannot be taken away.[21]

Thus the distinction between the "royal grant" covenant and the suzerainty type of covenant has been recognized as important for a better understanding of the nature of biblical covenants. The "royal grant" type may be designated promissory, since it held out unconditional promises to the recipient. Others, including the suzerainty treaty type of covenant but not restricted to this type, may be termed obligatory to indicate that they involved the meeting of obligations on the part of the recipients as conditions for their functioning. The Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 15, and the covenants with Phinehas and David were of the promissory covenant type, while the Mosaic covenant, reflecting as it did the suzerainty treaty pattern with emphasis on the duties of the recipients, was an obligatory covenant.

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[21] Ibid., p.194-5.

Stress on Obligation in the Mosaic Covenant

The emphasis of the Mosaic covenant, as presented in the Pentateuch, was on obligation. This is seen in the account of the establishment of the covenant at Sinai. Moses was to say to Israel in Yahweh's name, "if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my special possession (s^{e}gullāh) of all the peoples . . . ." (Ex.19:5). It was a recognition of obligation that was reflected in the people's reply, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do" (Ex.19:8). At the beginning and conclusion of the renewal of this covenant in the plains of Moab, obligation was again prominent. Moses said,

> And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, in order that you may live . . . . I command you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that you might live and multiply, and that Yahweh your God might bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it (Deut.4:1; 30:16).

The Mosaic covenant commenced and concluded with notification of obligation.

A number of words were used to speak of the terms of the Mosaic covenant, as is evident in the above quotations, and these also stressed obligation.[22] The general term tôrāh (law) was used often to refer to the Mosaic covenant in the phrase "the law of Moses" (e.g. Josh.8:31-32; 1 Kgs.2:3;

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[22] It is difficult to distinguish precisely between the connotations of the various words relating to law in the Old Testament. J. P. Lewis writes, "ḥoq occurs in sequences with other words for law: d^{e}bārîm (words), tôrāh (law), mišpāṭ (judgment), ʿēdûṯ (testimony), and miṣwāh (commandment). These words are used almost indiscriminately" (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, vol.1, s.v. ḥāqaq, p.317). Although these words may not be precisely distinguishable in some way they all connote obligation.

2 Kgs.23:25) and points to the guiding function of the covenant stipulations.[23] The word "statute" (ḥōq/ḥuqqāh), coming from a verbal root denoting inscribing or engraving, "apparently designates 'something that is engraved' and therefore established unchangeably as a statute by a lawgiver."[24] The "judgment" (mišpāṭ) appears to have come from the judicial sphere and refered to case law.[25] The "commandment" (miṣwāh) was "a specific instruction from God that (was) to be obeyed rather than . . . a general law that (was) to be observed."[26] The terms of the Mosaic covenant could also be designated collectively as "testimony" ('ēdûṯ), as that set of declarations which stood as an abiding affirmation to Yahweh's character and will and as a warning to those who would transgress (Ex.31:18; 34:29; 40:20).[27] In all these cases the words used to speak of the terms of the Mosaic covenant emphasized the obligatory nature of that covenant.

It has been noted that the Mosaic covenant in many ways exhibited the pattern of the ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaty. One of the main features of these treaties was their stipulations, which were presented in general and then in specific terms.[28] The Decalogue of Exodus 20 represented

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[23] International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1979 ed., vol.3, s.v. "Law in the OT," by R. K. Harrison, pp.76-77.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, s.v. 'ud, by Carl Schultz.

[28] See footnote 8 above for an analysis of Deuteronomy

the basic stipulations of the treaty and the so-called Book of the Covenant (Ex.20:22-23:33) corresponded to the detailed treaty stipulations. In Deuteronomy the sections from 12:1 to 26:19 performed the same function.[29] Thus also in following the suzerainty treaty pattern the Mosaic covenant stressed obligation.

The nature of the obligation of the Mosaic was wide-ranging, touching all spheres of life, as can be seen from the material of the Pentateuch itself. Basically the laws of the Mosaic covenant spoke of Israel's duty to Yahweh and to man (cf. Matt.22:37-40) or, to put it in treaty terms, duty to the great king and to fellow vassals. These two emphases are clearly seen in the Decalogue. The details of these responsibilities and their wide-ranging nature are also seen in other sections of the law. The Book of the Covenant of Exodus 20:22-23:33 dealt with (1) Israelite worship (20:22-26); (2) civil matters (21:1-23:13) including the rights of slaves (21:2-11), retaliation (vv.12-32), property (vv.33-36), theft, dishonesty and damage (22:1-15), seduction (vv.16-17), social and religious duties (vv.18-31) and the protection of rights (23:1-13); (3) regulations for the three major festivals (vv.18-31); and (4) the relationship of God and Israel (vv.20-33).[30] Even more categories are evident in the detailed stipulations contained in the covenant as renewed in

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in terms of the suzerainty treaty form.

[29] See J. A. Thompson, Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary, p.19.

[30] This outline has been taken with slight modification from R. K. Harrison's article "Law in the OT" in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 3:82.

Deuteronomy.[31] Also connected with the Mosaic covenant were regulations concerning priesthood, tabernacle and sacrifice (e.g. Lev.1-17). In all this the stress of the Mosaic covenant on obligation is evident.

It should be noted that the Mosaic covenant was not without elements of blessing or promise.[32] Special fellowship with Yahweh, promised even before the covenant was laid out in detail, was given as a motivation for the acceptance of the covenant (Ex.19:5-6). In the Decalogue itself Yahweh spoke of himself as the God "showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments" (20:6). Those who honoured parents were promised long life on the land given by Yahweh (v.12). Yet, as in the suzerainty treaty, there was not only promise or blessing in the Mosaic covenant but also curse. In this, as well as in the obvious prominence of obligation, the Mosaic covenant stood in contrast to the promissory covenants of the Old Testament. So in the Mosaic covenant Yahweh was said to be jealous God, bringing home, across the generations, the consequences of rebellion against him (v.5). Punishment would not escape those who misused his name (v.7). Outside the Decalogue too curses as well as blessings were present, and in greater proportion also.[33]

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[31] See Harrison's article mentioned in the previous footnote.

[32] Promise and the Mosaic covenant will be considered in more detail below; see page 42 below.

[33] In this the Mosaic covenant again followed the pattern of the suzerainty treaty. Harrison writes,

> "In Dt.15, (sic.; it appears Dt.28 is meant) as in the Hittite treaties, the list of curses for disobedience is considerably longer than that of the blessing for obedience" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,

Without doubt the Mosaic covenant was an obligatory rather than a promissory covenant, as is evident from its terminology, its suzerainty treaty pattern, the volume and detail of its laws and its curses against the disobedient.

Jeremiah and the Mosaic Covenant

It is important for a proper understanding of the nature of the new covenant to recognize that Jeremiah[34] knew of and referred to the Mosaic covenant. For him it was obviously an obligatory covenant and it is with this Mosaic covenant that he contrasts the new in 31:31-34.

In a number of places Jeremiah speaks of a covenant of the past. Although the name of Moses is not explicitly connected with this covenant, it is the Mosaic covenant of which he speaks. This is seen from the references to the time in

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vol.3, s.v. "Law in the OT," p.80).

[34] In the connection of the prophet's name with the words presented in the book of Jeremiah, no claim is being made that it consists of the ipsissima verba of Jeremiah. The diversity of the style and the substance of the material, and its apparent lack of ordering principle, highlighted by the alternative order of the LXX, indicate a complex, although not necessarily extended, history of textual transmission. The position taken in this paper is that words attributed to Jeremiah contain the message of the prophet. Where words are not directly attributed to Jeremiah they are, in this paper, spoken of as Jeremiah's. This is to indicate the unity of the book of Jeremiah and its message. The book of Jeremiah as a whole is taken as the context of the interpretation of any part. This is not to deny the significance of the historical setting of the individual segments of the book for the proper understanding. It is to recognize the literary context as present in the canonical book of Jeremiah as the final normative setting for its interpretation. For a discussion of the literary variety in the book of Jeremiah and an evaluation of its relationship to the prophet's ministry see John Bright, Jeremiah, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 19), pp.LV-LXXXV; for an outline of the history of criticism see R. K. Harrison, Introduction to the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), pp.809-17.

which it was established. It was made at the time of the Exodus, when Yahweh brought the fathers out of Egypt (11:2; 31:32; 34:13). That it was the Mosaic covenant is also seen from the covenantal language associated with it. It was a covenant which promised fellowship with Yahweh for an obedient Israel (11:4; cf. Ex.19:5, 6), which was connected with the giving of rain (14:21-22; cf. Deut. 28:12), with the ark of the covenant of Yahweh (3:16; cf. Num.10:33; 14:44; Deut.10:8; 31:9, 25, 26) and with the law concerning the release of Hebrew slaves (34:14; cf. Ex.21:2; Deut.16:12). It was the covenant which, if broken, promised defeat before enemies (34:20; cf. Deut.28:25-26) and predicted the surprised questions of the nations who would observe the consequent desolation (22:89; Deut.29:22-28).

Jeremiah also spoke of obligations which, although not explicitly connected with the term covenant, so reflected the language and concepts of the Mosaic covenant as to indicate that this was their source. Connected with the exodus period Jeremiah speaks in Yahweh's name of the promised blessing for the obedient (7:22-23; cf. Ex.19:5-6).[35] The commands of the Decalogue were prominent in the messages of Jeremiah. Yahweh

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[35] Some have taken the reference to lack of commands about sacrifice as an indicator of late development of the cultic regulations later attached to the Mosaic covenant in the Pentateuch. There is no need to understand anymore by Jeremiah's statement here than indicating the relative order, and hence importance, of the injunctions associated with the covenant. "It was only after the covenant had been ratified (24:1-8) that the cultic details of the tabernacle, the priesthood and the sacrifices were declared" (J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), pp.288-9; cf. C. F. Keil, The Prophecies of Jeremiah, 2 vols., Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 1:161-5).

had indicated to him at his call that the people of Judah had forsaken him, worshipped other gods and participated in idolatry (1:16; cf. Ex.20:3-6). Against this form of apostasy Jeremiah preached (e.g. 7:6, 9; 10:1-5; 11:17; 16:11-12; 19:4-5, 13) and explicitly denounced breaches of the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth commandments (7:9; cf. Ex.20:13-16). He was also concerned about the laws of the more detailed stipulations found outside the Decalogue -- legal defense of the orphan and the poor (5:28; 7:6; 22:3, 16; cf. Deut.24:17; 27:19; Ex.22:22; 23:6), the avoidance of the shedding of innocent blood (22:3; cf. Deut.19:10, 13), condemnation of extortion (6:6; 22:13; cf. Lev.6:2; Deut.24:14) and tale-bearing (6:28; cf. Lev.19:16), and the need for the practice of justice (mišpāṭ; 5:1; 7:5; 21:12; 22:3, 15; cf. Deut.16:19; 24:17). All these references to both basic matters of the law and its more detailed stipulations indicate that Jeremiah knew of the Mosaic covenant and that as a covenant of obligation.[36] It was with this covenant that he contrasted the new covenant in 31:34.

The Relationship of Mosaic Obligation to Promise

Introduction

Three main promissory covenants were significant for the relationship between Yahweh and his people - those with Abraham, Phinehas and David.[37] Although promissory covenants

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[36] Thompson states that, for Jeremiah, "the covenant of Moses was . . . fundamental for his whole thinking" (The Book of Jeremiah, p.61).

[37] The promissory covenant with Noah (Gen.6:18; 9:8-17) was also significant for the history of the people of God,

did not have conditions attached, the relationships within which they operated did. The promises of the promissory covenants were absolute and ultimately would be realized. Yet those experiencing the realization of the promises would only be those who met the obligations of the relationship. These obligations were detailed in the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant.

It should not be forgotten in connection with the covenants with Phinehas and David that, although they were made with individuals, the future of the descendants of Abraham as a whole was in view and not just that of the individuals and their families. Where there was a lack of realization of the promises of these covenants through disobedience, Abraham's offspring as a whole suffered, and not just the priests or kings. This was because the priests and kings who were spoken of in these covenants were mediators of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. This perspective is important for understanding the nature of God's dealings with his people as recorded in the books of Kings, where it seen that the good king brought blessing while the wicked ruler brought the curse of the covenant on the people.

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securing the safety of the world context within which Yahweh's dealing with his people would operate. Because of its special character and since references to the promises of this covenant are not prominent in Jeremiah (cf. Jer.31:35-37; 33:20,25), it has not been brought into the discussion. For notes on the nature of the covenant with Noah see John H. Stek, The Former Prophets: A Syllabus ([Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary], 1985), pp.87-8.

Abrahamic Covenants

The covenants between Yahweh and Abraham did not mark the beginning of the relationship between them. Yahweh had sovereignly established a relationship with Abraham in calling him from Ur and in giving him promises (Gen.12:1-3,7). Covenants followed which defined more exactly the relationship previously established and these repeated and expanded the basic initial promises. Although these later covenants were subordinate to the promises, the realization of the promises depended on the operation of these following administrating covenants.

As has been indicated, covenants could be promissory or obligatory and as such were distinct. Yet the differences between covenant types did not mean that they were so mutually exclusive that they could not both operate within the one relationship and, in concert, define its nature, including the conditions, of that relationship. In the Bible both types of covenant operated within one relationship and the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham was regulated in this way.

A promissory covenant was the first to be made with Abram (Gen.15). As a covenant to reward a servant "for good deeds or services already performed,"[38] it was granted by Yahweh "to his 'righteous' servant who believed in spite of the delayed promise and the barrenness of his wife."[39] In it Yahweh promised (again; cf. 12:7; 13:14-17) the inheritance of

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[38] John H. Stek, The Former Prophets: A Syllabus ([Grand Rapids: Calvin Theological Seminary], 1985), p.87; cf. M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant."

[39] Ibid., p.88

the land of Canaan (15:18-21). Although the covenant itself dealt directly with the question of land, in connection with it Yahweh also confirmed his former promises that Abram would have multiple descendants (15:5, 13, 16, 18; cf. 12:2; 13:6).

Later an obligatory covenant was made with Abram (Gen.17) "in the face of...failure 'to walk with God and be blameless' " -- the failure to trust Yahweh to provide the promised offspring through Sarah (cf. Gen. 16).[40] Here the obligation of circumcision was placed on Abram and his offspring. Those who did not receive the covenant sign broke the covenant (17:4) and, by implication, were rejected from the relationship which that covenant, along with the previous promissory one, regulated. Thus the relationship between Yahweh and Abram and his family, although initially being established by promise alone, and first defined by a promissory covenant, was also defined by and regulated in terms of obligation as conditions which were to be observed for the continuance of the relationship and its benefits.[41]

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[40] Ibid., p.90.

[41] A question may be raised as to what would have happened to the Abrahamic promise on which the salvation of the world depended if Abraham had broken the covenant. Should Abraham have opted out of the relationship at this point by rejecting circumcision it might be supposed that Yahweh's promises purposes would have failed. Yet, on the analogy of Yahweh's later dealing with his people in either restoring them to faithfulness to the covenant through chastisement (e.g. Judges) or preserving a remnant through judgment (e.g. Isa.6:13) or even proposing an alternative line of development for the promise fulfillment (e.g. Ex.32:10), it may be concluded that, in the event of Abraham refusing circumcision, Yahweh would have dealt with him in such a way as to ensure that his promise would have been fulfilled. The history of redemption would have been different but not the promise nor the fact of its realization.

In Genesis 18:17-19 more details of the obligatory aspect of the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham are revealed. Conditions were spoken of here as those which needed to be fulfilled to bring about the realization of Yahweh's promise to Abraham or "that which he had spoken concerning him." These conditions were expanded and detailed in the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant. This is seen from the fact that the promises previously given to Abraham and spoken of in verse 19 related to the time of Israel as a nation (cf. v.18) and that the obligations spoken of in Genesis 18 are seen to be reflected and expanded in the Mosaic legislation. Hence these verses indicate the connection, not only between obligation and the realization of the Abrahamic promises, as do the terms of the covenant of circumcision, but also between the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants.

Genesis 18:17-19 reads:

> (17) And Yahweh said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, (18) since Abraham will become a great and mighty nation and all nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ? (19) For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him in order that they might (or "to") keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, in order that Yahweh might bring about for Abraham what he has spoken about him."

Only those aspects of the verses germane to the argument will be considered here. First, a special relationship between Yahweh and Abraham is indicated by the term "chosen" (v.19). This renders a verb from the root yd', often translated "know." Here it obviously speaks of more than mere cognisance and, in the light of Amos 3:2 and Hosea 13:4, may be under-

stood as "chosen (him) in anticipatory love"[42] or at least "singled (him) out."[43] Abraham was uniquely Yahweh's.

The clause following this verb is clearly one of purpose,[44] indicating that Yahweh had chosen Abraham for the purpose of his directing his family. The next clause is introduced by the waw-consecutive with the perfect. The King James' Version makes this the beginning of a new sentence predicting what Abraham's family would do. But this breaks an expected logical connection between instruction by Abraham and response by his family, it speaks of an obedience not characteristic of them (unless new covenant times are postulated as being in view here), and is not required by the grammar. Most modern translations take this clause as an object clause giving the substance of Abraham's commanding (cf. the parentheses in the translation). As indicated by the translation, it could also be taken as a purpose clause.[45]

If the clause in question is taken as an object clause, the idea being communicated in the verse could be that Abraham's commanding, regardless of the response of his household, was to have the purpose of bringing about Yahweh's promised blessing. Yet the connection elsewhere between the obedience of Abraham's family (i.e. Israel; cf. Ex.15:26;

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[42] C. F. Keil, The Pentateuch, 3 vols, trans. by James Martin, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951) 1:229.

[43] A. E. Speiser, Genesis, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Co., 1964), p.133.

[44] See William Gesenius, Grammar, Par.165 b, p.504.

[45] See ibid., Par.165 a, p.503; cf. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), 1:546.

19:5; Deut. 4:40; 5:29, 33) and the realization of Yahweh's promises suggests the same connection here rather than that between Abraham's diligence in instruction and the coming of the blessings. More likely the idea is that the substance of Abraham's command was that his household should keep Yahweh's way and that they should do this in order that Yahweh might bring the promises to effect. While, on this interpretation, the passage does not explicitly state that the means of Yahweh's promises being realized was to be through the obedient response of Abraham's offspring, it is certainly implied. This idea accords with the other biblical data just given. On the other hand, if the waw-consecutive is understood as introducing a purpose clause, then clearly it is the keeping of Yahweh's way by Abraham's family that has the purpose of bringing the realization of the promises. It appears that either of the last two options are more consistent with the biblical picture than the other possible interpretations. Whether stated implicitly or explicitly, this verse indicates that Yahweh's means for the realization of the Abrahamic promises was to be through the obedience of those who were, in Abraham's name and as his offspring, to inherit them. Promise and obligation were to operate together in the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham's family.

That which had been promised to Abraham, spoken of in verse 19, is seen in Genesis 12-19. These promises focused on descendants, whether as a great nation (12:2), as multiplied (13:16: 15:4-5; 17:2, 4-6), as including kings (17:6, 16) or as coming through Sarah (17:16, 19, 21; cf.18:10, 13-14); on

the land (12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:8); and on being a blessing (12:2-3), while also including prediction of a period in Egypt (15:13-14, 16), of a relationship of fellowship between Yahweh and Abraham's descendants (17:7-8) and of the security of Abraham's family (12:3; cf. 22:17). Descendants and blessing are spoken of in the present context (v.18) and are therefore probably the first focus of reference of the last clause of verse 19, although not excluding the rest of the promises from consideration. These were the promises that would ultimately and certainly be realized and only through the obedience of those to whom they were given.

In this way Genesis 18:17-19 indicated that the promises associated with the relationship between Abraham and Yahweh had conditions for their fulfillment. These conditions were summed up in the phrase "keep the way of Yahweh", and especially in the terms "righteousness" and "justice."[46] The stipulations of the later Mosaic covenant were similarly spoken of as Yahweh's ways (Deut.5:33[30]; 8:6; 10:12 [cf.Ex.32:8]; 9:12, 16), stand in the same relationship as conditions to promise realization as in Genesis 18:17-19 (e.g. Deut.5:33[30]; 11:22-23) and emphasize righteousness and justice (e.g. Ex.22:21; 23:2-6; Lev.19:15; Deut.16:18-20).[47] So it is to be understood from Genesis 18:17-19 that, for the

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[46] Cf. Jer.22:15 where practice of righteousness and justice are spoken of as being the essence of knowing Yahweh, which knowledge would be provided in the new covenant of Jer.31:31-34; cf. footnote 49 below.

[47] Although the phrase ṣ^{e}dāqāh ûmišpāṭ is not used in the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant, the verses cited indicate that the concepts associated with the terms are present.

ultimate realization of the promises given to Abraham, stipulations, later to be detailed in the Mosaic covenant, needed to be met.

Levitical Covenant

A promissory covenant in connection with the priesthood was made with Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron (Num.25:10-13; cf. Ps.106:30-31). This was called a covenant of peace (Num.25:12) and guaranteed the priesthood, although not necessarily the high-priesthood,[48] to the descendants of Phinehas. This covenant was a particularization of the promise concerning Aaron and his family that "they shall have the priesthood by perpetual statute" (Ex.29:9). Clearly the covenant of Numbers 25 was promissory in that no conditions for its fulfillment were mentioned, as there were none attached to the original promise in Exodus.

While the main concern here is to show the relationship between promise and obligation, it should also be understood that this covenant was not merely for the benefit of a Levitical family. With the promises given concerning the priest the well-being of Abraham's offspring, as in the Abrahamic covenants, was still the ultimate concern. The priesthood was to function within Israel for the benefit of the

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[48] As Keil points out,
". . . this . . promise only secured to him an eternal priesthood, not specially the High-priesthood . . . . Consequently it was not abrogated by the temporary transfer of the high-priesthood from the descendants of Phinehas to the priestly line of Ithamar, because even then they still retained the priesthood" (C. F. Keil, Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 42-3).

people as a whole. This is revealed in the account of Numbers 25 where the task of the priest in relation to the people of Israel is shown clearly in Yahweh's commendation of Phinehas. By executing judgment on the flagrant rebels he had "made atonement (way^{e}kappēr) for the sons of Israel" (v.13). In doing this he had restrained Yahweh's anger which would have destroyed his people (v.11; cf.v.8). For Israel's preservation she needed the priesthood to function, and that in a manner in harmony with Yahweh's will as had Phinehas, of whom Yahweh had said, "...he was jealous with my jealousy" (v.11). This need of a priesthood for the preservation of God's people is also illustrated in Aaron's atoning work which had halted a previous judgment of Yahweh on his rebellious people (Num.16:43-48). Besides these special examples of the need of Israel for the work of the priests for her well-being before Yahweh there was the atoning sacrificing service of the priests, which culminated in the Day of Atonement rituals (see Lev.16). So the provision of the priesthood and the promises of perpetual priesthood had in view the preservation and blessing of Abraham's descendants as a whole.

Conditions were not attached to the covenant made with Phinehas, yet, like the relationships within which the Abrahamic promissory covenant operated, the covenant of the priesthood was also connected with obligation. This connection is revealed in the account of Eli in I Samuel 2 and 3. The priestly family of Eli had been disobedient in the service of the sacrifices, not adhering to the Mosaic stipulations for the priesthood (I Sam.2:15-16; cf. Lev.3:16-17; 7:31; 17:6;

Num.18:17).[49] For this Eli's family was to be almost entirely cut off (I Sam.2:31-33) and eventually replaced by another priestly family which would be faithful to Yahweh (v.35). This announcement of judgment, brought by an unknown man of God (v.27), was confirmed by a message given through the boy Samuel (3:11-14). Continuation in the privileges of priesthood was dependent on obedience.

Now it is true that Eli was not of the line of Eleazar and Phinehas, but of Ithamar's family.[50] Yet in the condemnation of the family of Eli a general principle was put forward in Yahweh's name, "those who honour me I will honour and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30). This principle, in the light of the relationship of promise to obligation seen in connection with the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, can be properly understood as applying not only to Eli's family but to the priesthood in general. This is also seen from the fact that, as well as Eli's own house, that of his father was also in view in the context immediately preceding the announcement of the proverbial principle. Eli's father's house was that of Aaron, the priestly family as a whole, since it was the father who was in Egypt who was being

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[49] NB. the wickedness of Eli's sons was characterized as not knowing Yahweh (1 Sam.2:12). This correlation between disobedience and not knowing Yahweh is important background for understanding the nature of the knowledge of Yahweh which was to be provided by the new covenant; see pages 76-77 below.

[50] For the connection of Eli with Ithamar see 1 Chron. 14:3, which connects an Ahimelech of David's day with the line of Ithamar, which Ahimelech can be traced as a descendant of Eli by comparing 2 Sam.8:17; 22:20; I Sam.14:3; 1:3 and taking into account the likely supposition that Ahimelech, son of Ahitub (2 Sam.22:20) and Ahijah, son of Ahitub (1 Sam.14:3) were the same person.

spoken of (v.27). Hence the principle of honoring Yahweh as being the condition for his recognition was shown to be operative for participation in the privileges of the priestly promises. These must have included those given in the covenant with Phinehas, part of Aaron's house.

This relationship of obligation to promise in connection with the covenant with Phinehas is supported by the prophecy of 1 Samuel 2:35. This prophecy was realized in the establishment of the family of Zadok, of the line of Phinehas,[51] with the dismissal of Abiathar of Eli's line in the time of Solomon (1 Kgs.2:26-27). Thus the prophecy to Eli was a promise taking up the previous covenant with Phinehas. In this prophecy it is a priest who will act in accord with Yahweh's will whose family will become the established priestly family. Thus, while the connection between promise and obligation is not as clearly stated in relation to the covenant with Phinehas as it was with respect to the Abrahamic covenants, it is certainly implied. The principle was that he who would realize the privileges of the priestly promise must be obedient to Yahweh's will.

Davidic Covenant

The Davidic covenant as set out in 2 Samuel 7:5-16 (cf. 1 Chron.17:4-14) was a promissory covenant, in form like the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 15. Though not called a covenant in 2 Samuel 7, it is identified as such elsewhere (2 Sam.23:5; 2 Chron.7:18; 21:7; Pss.89:34; 132:12; Jer.33:21).

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[51] See 1 Chron.24:3; cf. Ex.6:25.

It was that there would be a continuing Davidic dynasty. This covenant should not be seen as a substitute for the Abrahamic covenant nor a secondary promissory covenant alongside it, promising benefits to David and his family alone. Rather the Davidic covenant is best seen as an instrument to bring about the realization of the Abrahamic promises. The Abrahamic promises focused on the offspring of the patriarch, for it was in Abraham's seed that all the nations of the earth would be blessed as well as they who would be multiplied and "possess the gate of their enemies" (Gen.22:17-18). Although the Davidic covenant gave much attention to David and his dynasty, the people of Israel, who were the seed of Abraham, and their well-being, the concern of the Abrahamic promises, were also in the forefront (2 Sam.7:10; cf. Ps.132:15-16). Again the relationship between the Davidic covenant and the well-being of Abraham's descendants is seen in the accounts, in the books of Samuel and Kings, of Yahweh's dealing with his people, where Yahweh is seen to bless the people during the reign of the faithful king or to afflict them when their ruler was unfaithful to Yahweh. As the exercise of the priesthood was to be in the service of the relationship between Yahweh and his people as a whole, so was the exercise of kingship. The Davidic king was the mediator of the relationship between Yahweh and his people and the Davidic covenant was for the benefit of all the descendants of Abraham.

Although the Davidic covenant was promissory, the relationship it, in part, administered also involved obligations, specifically those of the Mosaic covenant. Now no

obligations are mentioned in 2 Samuel 7. Because of this some see a conflict in the history of Israel between the absolute promises of the Davidic covenant, and the people's false confidence in these, and true covenant Yahwism reflected in the Mosaic covenant with its conditions for receiving Yahweh's blessing. Dennis J. McCarthy writes,

> There are those who believe that the monarchy was a dangerous institution, always in tension with true Yahwist covenant-thinking, which in fact corrupted Israel and made it necessary for a reform to return to the true covenant idea.[52]

The prophets, then, are seen as supporters of the Mosaic covenant over against the Davidic, critical of the latter and of those who place their confidence in its provisions.

It is true that the people of God became overconfident in externals connected with the dynasty of David and which they saw as guarantees of Yahweh's continued protection regardless of covenant disobedience. The temple, built and maintained by the house of David, and in contextual focus in the establishing of the Davidic covenant (2 Sam.7:13), was viewed in this superstitious way (cf. Jer.7:4, 8, 10). Probably also were the Davidic covenant promises in Jeremiah's day, since he specifically points out that enjoyment of Davidic rule and its consequences, rather than being automatic, depended upon adherence to Mosaic covenant stipulations (Jer.17:19-27; 21:11-12; 22:3-5). It is also true, as can be seen from the examples from Jeremiah's ministry cited, that the prophets spoke against false security associated with

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[52] Dennis J. McCarthy, "Covenant in the Old Testament: The Present State of the Inquiry," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 27 (1965): 235.

Davidic institutions (cf. Isa.7:9, 13; 22:25). Yet this does not mean that the prophets reckoned the Mosaic covenant to be the genuine and the Davidic as false or second-rate. Rather they spoke from the presupposition that, in the relationship of Yahweh with his people, defined in part by the Davidic covenant, as by the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants before it, conditions were associated with the realization of the promises.

As has been said, no obligations associated with the Davidic covenant were mentioned in 2 Samuel 7.[53] Yet David clearly connected the realization of the promises presented in that covenant with Mosaic obligation when he says to Solomon,

> Keep the charge of Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances and his testimonies, according to what is written in the law of Moses, so that (l^{e}ma'an) you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn, so that (l^{e}ma'an) Yahweh may carry out his promise which he spoke concerning me, saying, "If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel. (I Kgs.2:3-4)

Here conditions were presented to Solomon. They were those of the Mosaic covenant. Obedience had purpose with a dual aspect as seen from the purpose clauses introduced by the conjunction l^{e}ma'an - success in rule and realization of the Davidic covenant promises in a continuing dynasty. Psalm 132:11-12 also associates obligation with the covenant promise to David, and, as has been noted above, so does Jeremiah (cf.29:15-16). For

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[53] McCarthy states,
"The continuation of the Davidic covenant is not dependent on the fidelity of the Davidids; quite the contrary, in the basic text, the promise of Nathan, it is explicitly said that even though the king is faithless, his position will be assured" (Ibid., p.238).

Jeremiah, persistent disobedience to the Mosaic covenant was not overridden by the Davidic promissory covenant. Rather, of the disobedient Davidic king he could say,

> 'As I live,' is the declaration of Yahweh, 'even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet ring on my right hand, yet I would pull you off . . . . no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah.' (Jer.22:24, 30)

Yet Jeremiah did not deny the continuing validity of the Davidic covenant. As strongly as he proclaimed judgment on the disobedient king he announced Yahweh's faithfulness to the Davidic covenant (Jer.33:20-22, 25-26; cf. 23:5-6).

A certain tension is evident in the contrast between absolute promise of the Davidic covenant and conditions for the realization of the promise. This tension is also present in the dual aspect of absolute promise and obligation in the relationships between Yahweh and Abraham and Phinehas. One way to account for this tension is to postulate conflict between two covenant theologies, a popular Davidic and a prophetic Mosaic. But this solution would mean a conflict of theologies in the thinking of Jeremiah himself, since he spoke both of condition and of an irrevocable covenant with David. Another way to account for the tension is to understand the promise of the Davidic, or of any promissory covenant of Yahweh, as absolute and assured of ultimate fulfillment but that the realization of its promises at any point of time depended on meeting the conditions of the relationship within which the promissory covenant operated, conditions which, for the Abrahamic, Levitical and Davidic covenants, were detailed in the Mosaic covenant stipulations. John Stek introduces this idea

in his comments on the promissory covenant with Noah when he writes that "only the seed of Noah that shares his moral integrity will share in the full benefits of this covenant . . . ."[54] Reflecting this same idea in connection with the Davidic covenant Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., states,

> The "breaking" or conditionality can only refer to personal and individual invalidation of the benefits of the covenant but it cannot affect the transmission of the promise to the lineal descendants.[55]

Thus it appears that the Davidic promissory covenant of 2 Samuel 7 was unconditional in that it would find ultimate realization. Yet for its benefits to be received, obedience to the Mosaic covenant obligations was needed on the part of the king. So the Davidic covenant, like the Abrahamic and Levitical, was linked to the Mosaic covenant obligations as conditions which needed fulfillment for the realization of the promises.[56]

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[54] The Former Prophets, p.88; cf. his comment on the covenant with Phinehas: ". . . as subsequent history appears to show, only those descendants of Phinehas who walked in the zeal of Phinehas benefitted from the Berith-grant" (Ibid., p.92).

[55] Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), p.157.

[56] This brief account of the relationship between the Davidic covenant and Mosaic obligation does not deal with all the difficulties connected with the meaning of 2 Samuel 7 and its outworking in the subsequent history of redemption, especially that connected with the apparent promise of an unbroken rule for David's dynasty and not merely an unbroken line of descendants. Yet the account is sufficient to indicate how the condition of obedience to Mosaic obligations for realization of the blessing of the Davidic promise could be attached to the absolute promise of a Davidic line which would (eventually) have permanent rule.

Promise and Obligation in the Mosaic Covenant

It is clear that the promissory covenants presented absolute and unconditional promises which would certainly come to fruition. The relationship between Yahweh and his people was, in part, determined by these promissory covenants. Yet these promises were only to be realized in the history of the people of God through the fulfillment of the conditions contained in the Mosaic covenant. Clearly, as has been shown above, the Mosaic covenant was one of obligation, in contrast to the Abrahamic, Levitical and Davidic promissory covenants. Yet, as has been said, there were also promises in the Mosaic covenant. These were reiterations of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant and, in the Mosaic covenant, the realization of these in the life of Israel was linked to the fulfillment of the conditions of that covenant. With respect to the relation between promise and obligation in the relationship between Yahweh and his people, the Mosaic covenant made even clearer what has been shown to be present elsewhere. For the realization of the promises of the relationship, conditions needed to be met.

Although the promise to Abraham was multi-facetted,[57] three main themes appear throughout its presentation to the patriarchs -- descendants, land and being a blessing to the nations.[58] Certainly the first two of these, and probably the third, were taken up in the Mosaic covenant, as were two other promises given less explicit mention in the Abrahamic

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[57] See T. E. McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise, Chapter 1.

[58] For references see page 32 above.

covenant -- fellowship between Yahweh and his people (Gen.17:7-8),and the security of Abraham's offspring in the face of opponents (Gen.12:3; 22:17). The promised deliverance from Egypt, revealed in connection with the Abrahamic covenant (Gen.15:13-14, 16), had already been effected as a prelude to the establishment of the Moasic covenant.

The focus on the promise of multiple descendants is shown, in Exodus, to have been realized to some extent already (1:7). Yet Moses' appeal to it when interceding for Israel indicated that it still stood (Ex.32:13). In Deuteronomy it was taken up more explicitly (e.g. 6:3; 8:1) and was an important aspect of the blessing for the obedient (28:4, 11). The promise of land featured even more prominently in connection with the Mosaic covenant. This aspect of the Abrahamic covenant was mentioned to Moses at the bush (Ex.3:8, 17; cf. 6:4, 8), taken up by Moses in his intercession (32:13) and repeated in the covenant renewal (Deut.4:1; 8:1), being also the presupposition of the blessings at the treaty conclusion (28:3-6, 8, 11-12). The promise of fellowship between Yahweh and his people is also clear in the Mosaic covenant. It was promised to Moses before the exodus from Egypt (Ex.6:7), presented as the essence of the covenant relationship at its inception (19:5-6) and initially realized in the establishment of the tabernacle (29:45-46). The purpose of the covenant renewal on the plains of Moab was to reaffirm the same relationship (Deut.29:12-13). Also the security of Yahweh's people, another aspect of the Abrahamic covenant provisions, is promised both in their invasion of the promised land (Ex.23:27-31; cf.

Deut.8:1) and its retention (28:7). The Mosaic covenant took up and built upon the promises of the covenant made with the fathers.[59]

The Mosaic covenant made the relationship between promise and obligation clear. Fulfillment of obligation was to be the means for realizing, in any particular situation, that which had been promised. This can be demonstrated by a number of examples. Fellowship between Yahweh and his people was certainly the goal of the Mosaic covenant. Before the

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[59] The Abrahamic promise of being a blessing to the nations is not presented as clearly in the Mosaic covenant as some of the other promises. Yet this should not be seen as an abrogation of this aspect of the Abrahamic promise. It is evident that aspects of the Abrahamic promise received differing emphases depending on the circumstances of their restatement. So at the bush, where Yahweh's emphasis was on the deliverance of his people from an alien power so that they might come into the land of promise (Ex.3:7-10), those aspects of the Abrahamic promise pertinent to the present situation of the oppressed and landless were stressed. On the other hand, Moses, in his intercession for Israel focused on the multiplicity of descendants and the land to be inherited by them as those aspects of the promise most relevant to the crisis in which Israel was threatened with extermination (32:13; cf. v.10). Blessing to the nations was not emphasized in the Mosaic covenant because the primary concern at that time was the establishment of Israel as a nation. So McComiskey writes,

> "The paucity of emphasis on Gentile blessing in the Mosaic covenant does not imply the abrogation of that element of the promise . . . . The covenant expressed the promise in terms that were appropriate for its recipients and for the circumstances in which it was given. The focus of the Mosaic legislation is on the formation of Israel as a nation" (The Covenants of Promise, p.71).

Further, in the light of Abraham's intercession before the destruction of the cities of the plain, an intercessory role in relation to the nations for Abraham's offspring, Israel, may well be implied by the designation of their covenant status as a "kingdom of priests" (19:6). In this way the aspect of the Abrahamic promise of being a blessing to the nations would also be evident in the Mosaic covenant. Also, as Abraham's descendants, the people of Israel were recipients of the traditions from the fathers which contained this aspect of the promise. It is unlikely that they were ignorant of its continuing relevance.

exodus it had been promised to Moses as the outcome of the Abrahamic covenant (Ex.6:7; cf. vv.3-4). Yet, when spoken of at the foot of Sinai, it was clear that for the realization of the promise in Israel's experience conditions had to be met. Yahweh said to Israel, ". . . if (*'im*) you will certainly obey my voice and keep my covenant, then you shall be my special treasure among all the peoples . . . ." (19:5). Put in another way, Moses pointed out that entering the Mosaic covenant had a purpose. It was "in order that (*l^{e}ma'an*) he (Yahweh) might establish you (Israel) today as his people and that he might be your God . . . ."(Deut.29:13). In both these cases it was the Abrahamic promise of fellowship between Yahweh and Abraham's offspring that was in view. This would only find realization through adherence to the Mosaic covenant, which had this realization as its purpose. The same relationship between promise and obligation was spoken of elsewhere in the Mosaic covenant. The purpose of the command of the covenant was that Israel might live and possess the land (4:1; cf. 8:1). "Life itself depended on the fulfillment (of Yahweh's laws) . . . as Moses repeatedly impressed upon them (Israel) . . . ."[60] So Moses exhorted Israel on the plains of Moab, "O, Israel, you should listen and be careful to perform, in order that (*'^{av}ser*)[61] it might be well with you and that you might

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[60] C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch*, 3 vols., Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 3:309.

[61] See ibid., p. 322 and *'^{av}ser* 8. b. in Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew English Lexicon of the Old Testament: With an Appendix Containing Biblical Aramaic*, corrected impression (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p.83.

multiply greatly . . . ." (Deut.6:3). In all these cases the relationship between Abrahamic promise and Mosaic obligation was the same. For the realization of the promise in their experience the conditions of the Mosaic covenant had to be met. If the stipulations of the covenant were broken then enjoyment of the blessing of a relationship with Yahweh would be replaced with the covenant curse (cf. Deut.28:15-68).

Conclusion

Promissory covenants were established with Abraham, Phinehas and David. Each of these was concerned with the relationship between Yahweh and the offspring of Abraham as a whole, even when made with individuals, for these individuals and the descendants were mediators of Yahweh's promises to Abraham's family. Absolute and unconditional promises were given in each of the promissory covenants, yet in the relationship within which they operated they were connected with obligations, specifically those detailed in the Mosaic covenant stipulations. This connection between promise and obligation is also clearly presented in the Mosaic covenant, which takes up the promises of the Abrahamic. It appears that the best account of this connection between absolute promise and the need for fulfillment of obligation for the realization of the promise is that, while the promises always stood and would certainly find ultimate fulfillment, the participation in them from one period to another depended upon the nature of the response to the Mosaic stipulations.

The Condition of Israel Under the Mosaic Covenant

The benefits of the promissory covenants were only to be realized through the fulfillment, by Israel, of the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Because this was the means of bringing the promises to fruition, they were never realized fully or in a lasting fashion because the obedience of Israel as a whole was neither deep-seated nor continuing.[62] This lack of covenant faithfulness is seen in the history of Israel before Jeremiah and it is also reflected in the book of Jeremiah. Against such a background the new covenant was proclaimed. Because of the continuing unfaithful character of Israel the new covenant was needed.

The Condition of Israel before Jeremiah

The history of Israel before Jeremiah may be divided into three main periods. With respect to each period a representative passage is sufficient to indicate how well or poorly Israel was meeting the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Numbers 14 gives clear insight into the state of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people in the wilderness period, Judges 2 does the same for the period after the

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[62] There were some preliminary and genuine realizations of the Abrahamic covenant promises (and of those of the other promissory covenants), e.g. the multiplication of offspring (Ex.1:7); the reception of the land (Josh.21:43-45). Yet the promissory covenants had an "everlasting" aspect (*'olam*) (cf. Gen.3:15; 17:7-8; 48:4; Num.25:13; Ps.106:31; 2 Sam.7:13, 16; Ps.89:28-29; 36-37). This aspect was never fulfilled in Israel's history. With respect to the promise of the land, W. D. Davies writes,

> "While the promise was regarded as fulfilled in the settlement, that settlement was not regarded as a complete fulfillment . . . the land had to achieve rest and peace" (quoted in T. E. McComiskey, *The Covenants of Promise*, p.47).

conquest but before the monarchy as does 2 Kings 17 for the period of the monarchy. Each of these passages reveals the condition of the character of Israel over a long period of her history. In each Israel is seen to have failed to have lived up to the Mosaic covenant requirements and so to have suffered the covenant curse rather than the full realization of the promises.

Numbers 14 reveals the response of the children of Israel to the negative report of the spies (cf.13:31). They grumbled against Moses, sought to appoint a new leader and were prepared to return to Egypt (14:2-4). Encouragement by Joshua and Caleb to reconsider only led to their attempted stoning (vv.6-10). Except for the intercession of Moses, Yahweh would have disinherited the people entirely (vv.11-20). As it was, all the Israelites above twenty years of age, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, were kept from attaining the land of promise (vv.28-30).

This passage presents a number of important points. First, even although Yahweh purposed to destroy all these offspring of Abraham who had rebelled, the promise to Abraham concerning his offspring was not to be abrogated. Even if all the nation had been destroyed, Yahweh indicated that through Moses, also a child of Abraham, the promise would have been fulfilled (v.12; cf. Ex.32:10). As it was, even though a large portion of the nation would not receive the promised inheritance, in fact their children would (v.29). So, though many who were originally the beneficiaries of the promises were rejected because of their faithlessness to the Mosaic

covenant, there were still those for whom the promise would be fulfilled. Second, it is clear that it was against the Mosaic covenant that the people were rebelling, for one of the stipulations of the treaty was that the people should follow Yahweh's leading into Canaan (Ex.23:20-23, 27-31). Third, the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea was a typical example of such behavior on the part of Israel, since up to that point they had questioned and resisted Yahweh's leadership many times (Num.14:22).[63] While this was a low point in the relationship between Yahweh and his people, there were to be other rebellions in the wilderness.[64] In fact the wilderness period was viewed again and again as one of rebellion by Israel against Yahweh's covenant stipulations (cf. Ps.78:10, 17-39; 95:8-11; 106:8-33; Neh.9:16-18). Thus the Israel in the wilderness period was characterized by a constant breaking of the conditions of the Mosaic covenant.

A summary statement of the history of Israel in Canaan before the monarchy is given in Judges 2:11-23. This is part of an introductory section to the book.[65] It presents a cycle of apostasy, oppression, suffering and deliverance from oppression which was typical of Israel's condition in the covenant relationship during this period. This pattern is

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[63] A list of ten rebellions is given in C. F. Keil, The Pentateuch, 3:94, but they also note: "Ten is used as the number of completeness and full measure . . . ." For another similar listing see NIVSB, p.211.

[64] E.g. those associated with Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num.16); the grumbling at Meribah (20:2-13) and that which brought the fiery serpents (21:4-9); the apostacy with Baal of Peor (25:1-18).

[65] For the outline of Judges see John H. Stek, The Former Prophets, pp.10-11.

worked out in more detail in the particular examples associated with the various judges in the chapters that follow. The particular sin mentioned in this summary section is that of following other gods, those of the peoples of the land (vv.11-13). This was directly against the Mosaic covenant stipulations (Ex.20:3-6; 23:24-25, 32-33; Deut.5:7-10; 6:14). The point being made is that there was no covenant faithfulness for Israel as a whole when there was no divinely appointed leader. For "it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers . . . ." (Jud.2:19). This theme is also taken up in the last section of the book in the repeated phrase "in those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6; 21:5; cf. 18:1; 19:1). So the message of Judges is that there was no general deep-seated or lasting commitment by Israel to the covenant.[66] As with the time of the wilderness wanderings, the period before the monarchy was remembered as one of covenant unfaithfulness (cf. 1 Sam.12:9; Ps.78:54-64; 106:34-43; Neh.9:26-30). With justification it can be said, "The book of Judges . . . depicts Israel's massive failure to fulfill her vocation in the promised land, and the consequent witholding of the promised 'rest.' "[67] Again Israel failed repeatedly to fulfill the conditions of the Mosaic covenant.

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[66] Of course this does not mean that no individual was committed to Yahweh during the period of the judges. The book of Ruth points to covenant faithfulness on the part of some. It was Israel as a nation that apostasized.

[67] John H. Stek, The Former Prophets, p.7.

Although the period summed up in 2 Kings 17:7-23 was about three hundred years in duration, the evaluation of the period given there indicates that throughout the period generally the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant were not adhered to. The catalogue of apostasies is long, but are all associated with following other gods. Thus the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant were broken, as can be seen from the two examples of violations of explicit command of Yahweh (vv.12, 15; cf. Ex.20:4; Deut.12:30-31). Although the primary focus in this section is on the northern kingdom of Israel, as far as lack of faithfulness to the covenant was concerned Judah was included as well (2 Kgs.17:13, 19-20). Such continued covenant breaking brought the covenant curse instead of the blessing as Yahweh's people exiled from the promised land (vv.18-20; cf. Deut.28:64-68).[68] Thus the unconditional promises of the Abrahamic, Levitical and Davidic covenants were not realized in the permanent form intended as Yahweh's people were removed from land, temple and palace because of lack of adherence to the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Such was the context of Jeremiah's proclamation of the new covenant.[69]

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[68] Even if 2 Kings 17:20 does not refer to Judah their eventual exile is recorded explicitly in the subsequent account in chapter 25.

[69] This is not to say that Jeremiah 31:31-34 was from after the destruction of Jerusalem. Since Jeremiah prophesied such a destruction, the new covenant prophecy, even if given before the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the southern kingdom, has a rejected Israel and Judah as its context.

The Condition of Israel According to Jeremiah

Jeremiah spoke about Yahweh's people under the Mosaic covenant in wholly negative terms. All the passages referring to the Mosaic covenant and its stipulations, both general and particular,[70] did so in reference to the neglect of the obligations of the covenant by Jeremiah's contemporaries (or their forebears) and not to the observation of them. Yahweh's people rejected what Yahweh had said both in the Mosaic covenant (Jer.7:23; 11:2-10; 22:9; 34:13) and in the prophetic application of it (7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4). It was because of this rejection of Yahweh's word that the nation faced disaster (6:9; 11:10-11), more specifically the destruction of Jerusalem by the invading armies of Nebuchadnezzar (32:28-35; 34:13-22) and exile (9:13-16). Those who fled to Egypt, because of persistence in rejection of Yahweh's instructions, would not escape judgment (44:7-14). Because of covenant unfaithfulness, Yahweh's people faced the covenant curse. It was not that they were irreligious. In fact they were charged with being religious rather than being obedient, trusting in an external ritualism in their temple worship (6:20; 7:4, 21-22).[71] Also the leaders of Yahweh's people were held as being particularly responsible for the apostate condition of the nation.[72]

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[70] See pages 17-18 above.

[71] "The point being made by Jeremiah was that ritual performance divorced from an attitude of obedience and faith were worthless in God's sight . . . ." (J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, p.262).

[72] This aspect is stressed by H. D. Potter, who says, "Jeremiah saw the fall of Israel and especially Judah as primarily the responsibility of the leadership and of the

Teachers, who should have restored the erring through rebuke and warning, spoke superficial words of comfort (8:8-12; cf. 6:14). Rulers, who should have set the example in following Yahweh, turned the people from him (10:21; 23:1-2).[73] Prophets, who should have proclaimed Yahweh's righteous ways, encouraged evildoing by word and example (23:9-22; 29:21-32). Yahweh's people, "from the least to the greatest" were unfaithful to Yahweh in despising the obligations of the Mosaic covenant.

An examination of Jeremiah's evaluation of the heart of the people, that which was to be changed in the new covenant, reveals the sad condition of Yahweh's people even more clearly. The people of God in Jeremiah's day had heart trouble. Throughout the book of Jeremiah negative things are said about the state of the heart of Yahweh's people. Especially they, because of "the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts" (7:24; 11:8; 16:12; 18:12; cf.13:10), had strayed from following Yahweh rather than listening to his direction which he had given at the time of the exodus (7:22; 13:10) and, since that time, through his prophets (7:25). Now, in opposition to Yahweh's true spokesmen, false prophets encouraged the people in their wilful disobedience (26:16-7), which was a reflection of their own heart deception (23:26;

> ruling classes. Prophets, priests, kings and courtiers . . . were at the root of the nation's fall" ("The New Covenant in Jeremiah XXXI 31-34," Vetus Testamentum 33 (1983): 353).

But his viewing of the situation with which the new covenant was contrasted as being restricted to the reprehensibility of these leaders is too narrow.

[73] Rulers are designated by the term "shepherds" in these passages; cf. J. Bright, Jeremiah, p.72.

cf.14:14). The covenant message, which had been rejected, would have led to fellowship between the people and Yahweh, as expressed in the familiar words "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (7:23). And, in this relationship, obedience would have issued in their prosperity (7:23). As nature abhors a vacuum, so does heart commitment. Rejection of Yahweh had led to allegiance to other "masters," the Baals (9:14; cf.11:10; 13:10). Just as forsaking Yahweh meant forsaking his covenant blessing, adherence to others brought his covenant curse. The faulty heart allegiance of God's people was to bring Yahweh's judicial scattering of the population in exile according to the stipulations of the covenant made with the fathers (9:16; 16:13; cf.Deut.4:27; 28:64).

Judah's heart trouble consisted in a lack of fear of Yahweh (5:22-4). This showed itself in lack of recognition of Yahweh's providence in giving the covenant blessings of the field (5:24; cf.Lev.26:4; Deut.28:11-2), and in their living in luxury while failing to pursue covenant justice for the disenfranchised (5:28; cf.7:6; 22:3; Ex.22:21; Deut.14:29; 24:17-22; 27:19). Even although Judah had seen the covenant curse of exile come on her northern sister, Israel, true change of heart was not characteristic of her (3:10). Her people's heart commitment to other gods was too deeply embedded, their sin "engraved with an iron tool, inscribed with a flint point on the tablets of their hearts and on the horns of their altars" (17:1).[74]

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[74] H. D. Potter explains the possible significance of the last phrase in his comments on this verse:

For safety - for salvation - Judah needed a change of heart. Yahweh had access to the heart and would reward according to its condition (17:10). The heart needed to be washed from evil (4:14), to be circumcised (4:4). Only such circumcision of the heart would turn away Yahweh's anger. The concept of "uncircumcised heart" is probably linked to that of "uncircumcised ears," which condition hindered the recepetion of Yahweh's message (6:10).[75] Certainly lack of hearkening to Yahweh's words was a major problem in the lives of the people of Jeremiah's day (cf.7:24; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12). To circumcise the heart, therefore, Yahweh's people needed to hearken to his covenant instructions and so remove their evil deeds" (4:4), against which Jeremiah spoke throughout his ministry. If they did not, the people of Judah, as the people

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"It seems clear that here we have a reference to the act of atonement involving the sacrifice of an animal some of whose blood was smeared on the horns of the altar. So deepseated was the nation's sin that it had become engraved on the very horns of the altar where the blood of the sin offering which was supposed to wipe away sin was smeared" ("The New Covenant in Jeremiah XXXI 31-34," p.352).

[75] S. R. Driver writes,
"An uncircumcised heart is one which is, as it were, closed in, and so impervious to good influences and good impressions, just as the uncircumcised ear (Jer.6:10) is an ear which, from the same cause, hears imperfectly . . . ."(A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy, International Critical Commentary, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p.125.
In Deuteronomy circumcision of the heart is contrasted with stiffening (of the neck, see [gāšāh] 3. a. in Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew English Lexicon, p.904). Through the Old Testament, where hardening of the neck (spirit or heart) is spoken of it is usually seen from the context that this hardening is equivalent to lack of response to an instruction or message (e.g. Deut.2:30; 2 Kgs.17:14; Neh.9:16, 17, 29; Ps.95:8; Prov.29:1; Jer.7:26; 17:23; 19:15). This supports the idea that uncircumcision of the heart, like stiffening of the neck, refered to a refusal to hearken to a message.

of Israel before them, faced conquest and exile as a judgment from Yahweh whose ways they were not willing to follow. Because they did not, this Mosaic covenant curse came.

It has been seen that the people of Israel in their relationship with Yahweh, also before the time of Jeremiah, had not kept the conditions of the Mosaic covenant. Jeremiah viewed the history of God's people from the time of the wilderness wandering up until his own day in the same way.[76] Through Jeremiah Yahweh accuses,

> Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day I have sent you all my servants the prophets, again and again, but they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did more evil than their fathers (Jer.7:25-26; cf. 3:25; 11:7-8).

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[76] In Jeremiah 2:2-3 (cf. 50:7) there is a positive evaluation of the condition of Israel at the beginning of her history. Some see this period of Israel's faithfulness to Yahweh as extending throughout the entire wilderness wanderings (e.g. J. A. Thompson, The Book of Jeremiah, pp.162-65; cf. J. Bright, Jeremiah, pp.14, 17). If this were so there would be some tension between Jeremiah's evaluation of the wilderness period and the representation of it in the Pentateuch, the Psalms and Nehemiah. In response to this tension Calvin sees the reference as being to Yahweh's devotion to Israel (J. Calvin, Commentaries on the Prophet Jeremiah and Lamentations, 5 vols., trans. by John Owen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1950), 1:69-70). It may be that Jeremiah is using hyperbole to highlight the heinousness of Israel's later apostasy in Cannan. Keil understands the positive reference in Jeremiah as being to the period before Sinai only. He writes,

> "History knows of no apostasy of Israel from its God and no idolatry of the people during the time from Exodus out of Egypt till the arrival at Sinai, and of this time alone Jeremiah speaks. All the rebellions of Israel against its God fall within the time after the conclusion of the covenant of Sinai . . . ." (C. F. Keil, The Prophecies of Jeremiah, 1:51).

This interpretation relieves the apparent tension in a way that is consistent with the data. It was not just from the time of the settlement that Israel's covenant unfaithfulness stemmed, according to Jeremiah, but from Sinai (cf. Jer. 31:32).

As with the people of Jeremiah's day, the fathers had been unfaithful to Yahweh in following other gods and especially Baal (9:14[13]; 16:11-12; 23:27). They were also accused of breaking other stipulations of the Mosaic covenant such as the Sabbath law (17:22-23) and that for the release of slaves (34:13-14). It was this example of covenant breaking that had been handed on to Jeremiah's generation (9:14; 14:20; cf. 3:25; 44:17) who had excelled their fathers in following it (16:12; cf.7:26). Thus for Jeremiah, as for other authors of the Old Testament, the Mosaic covenant had never been genuinely adhered to nor its conditions met, neither in the past nor in his own day. It was in such a context that he prophesied of the new covenant.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, in the Old Testament, a b^{e}rît or "covenant" was "that which bound two parties together." In the context of the ancient Near East, the Mosaic covenant as presented in the Pentateuch, which was to bind Yahweh and Israel together, was recognized as of the suzerainty treaty rather than of the parity treaty type, in that it was imposed by the great king, Yahweh, on the vassal, Israel. Among other things, this meant that that the Mosaic covenant was of an obligatory nature, containing conditions which the recipient was required to fulfill.

It was also seen that, in contrast with the obligatory type of covenant, there were, in the ancient Near East, "royal grants" or promissory covenants. In these, in distinction

from the suzerainty treaty, all obligation was on the initiator of the agreement. Such "royal grants" were made to those who excelled in loyal service. It was shown that the covenants with Abraham (in Genesis 15), Phinehas and David had the characteristics of the promissory covenant and, in this way, differed from the Mosaic covenant. Evidence from the Pentateuch as a whole made it clear that the Mosaic covenant was of the obligatory and not the promissory type. Additional evidence from Jeremiah showed that the prophet focused much attention on the Mosaic covenant and also recognized its obligatory character.

In the chapter it was seen as well that promissory covenants contained unconditional promises, but that the realization of these in any particular case depended upon the recipients meeting the conditions of the relationship between them and Yahweh. This was seen to be clearly attested with respect to the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 18:17-19. Abraham's descendants would only obtain those things promised to Abraham if they acted according to Yahweh's will. This will of Yahweh was seen to be set out in detail in the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Similar connections between the fulfillment of the obligations of the Mosaic covenant and the realization of the promises of the covenants with Phinehas and David in the lives of Yahweh's people was shown. This connection between fulfilling the condition of the Mosaic covenant and the realization of the promises of the promissory covenants was also recognized as clearly presented in the Mosaic covenant itself.

Finally it was shown that passages from Numbers 14, Judges 2 and 2 Kings 17 indicated that Israel as a nation, throughout her history, did not fulfill the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Jeremiah's testimony agreed with this evaluation of Israel's covenant life. It must be concluded, then, that the promises of the promissory covenant had not been realized in Israel since the conditions upon which their realization depended had never been truly fulfilled.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW COVENANT -- REPLACEMANT OF THE MOSAIC

Introduction

This chapter seeks to clarify what was new about the new covenant according to Jeremiah 31:31-34. The pericope is translated with notes and analysed syntactically to show how both language and structure combine to focus attention on the new covenant as a contrast to the Mosaic and as the instrument of the realization of a personal and lasting relationship between Yahweh and his people. Discussion of the many similarities between the Mosaic covenant and the new, and recognition of the fact that there were those under the Mosaic covenant who participated in "new covenant" realities, highlights the question, What was new about the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34?

Before more detailed exegesis of the passage is undertaken, the willingness of Israel's rebellion against Yahweh and his means of dealing with this, as revealed elsewhere, is briefly considered in order to understand that Jeremiah was not speaking of something unknown in 31:31-34, but was reapplying and adding to previous traditions. In the light of this background, exegesis reveals that the new

covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was to establish a people of Yahweh in a new, unbreakable fellowship with him. In this relationship Yahweh's law would not merely be an external code, as with the Mosaic covenant, but would be internal. Obedience of the people would be unprompted and spontaneous, and that in all. This change would come because of a forgiveness new in the extent both of its condescension and of its endurance.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

31. "Days are coming," (the declaration of Yahweh) "when I will[1] make[2] with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah[3] a new covenant,

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[1] For the hinnēh clause plus perfect waw-consecutive see Thomas O. Lambdin, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), Par.135 (2), pp.169-70.

[2] Literally "cut," cf.Jer.34:18-9.
"In ancient times, making a covenant involved a self-maledictory oath . . . , which was often symbolized by cutting an animal in two and walking between the two halves..." (NIVSB, p.1183).
Thus also in verses 32 and 33.

[3] Although Rud. Kittel, ed., Biblia Hebraica, 4th ed., (Stuggart: Wuerttembergischen Bibelanstalt, 1937) and K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983) suggest that the phrase "and with the house of Judah" is an addition, no textual evidence is given for its proposed deletion. The equivalent phrase occurs in the LXX. In Jeremiah it is not unusual to have both kingdoms linked in this fashion (e.g. 30:3; 32:30,32; 33:7; 50:5). The concept of a reunited people of God is met elsewhere (e.g. 3:18; cf. Hos.1:11; Ezek.37:15-22) and is represented by the term "house of Israel" in verse 33.

32. [4] not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which covenant of mine they[5] broke, although[6] I[5] was a husband[7] to them," (the declaration of Yahweh).

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[4] This following noun clause is considered to be a relative clause qualifying "covenant" (see William Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, ed. E. Kautzsch, 2d Eng. ed. by A. E. Cowley (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), Par. 155 a-b, e, pp. 485-6). Also the clause can be understood to have a number of elements elided. With these supplied the clause would read, "(which will) not (be a covenant) like the covenant . . . ." See the following Syntactical Analysis.

[5] The subject is made emphatic by an independent pronoun being added to the inflected verb (see William Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, Par. 135 a, p.437).

[6] A disjuntive use of waw (see Thomas O. Lambdin, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), Par. 132, pp.162-5) introducing a circumstantial clause indicating a fact contrary to that in the previous clause (see William Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, Par. 142 d, p.456, cf. Par.140 e, p.453).

[7] The LXX appears to presuppose the root g'l, "loathe," or the root bhl, "feel loathing," by its translation ēmelēsa, "I disregarded" (cf.Heb.8:9). There is no strong reason for abandoning the Masoretic reading, which could also be translated "though I was their lord" (cf. JB). The choice between "husband" and "lord" is not easy, although "to be a husband" is an appropriate meaning for the root b'l (cf. Deut.21:13; 24:1; Isa.54:5; 62:5). Also Jeremiah speaks elsewhere of the exodus time in terms related to marriage (e.g. 2:2, 32; 3:1-10). Bright sums up the issue thus:

> Though it is scarcely preferable to do so, one can translate " I was their husband" in place of "I was their lord" . . . , in which case the covenant relationship is described in terms of a marriage . . . But the meaning would be little changed by this, for in ancient Israelite society the husband was his wife's "lord" and expected her faithfulness and obedience." (John Bright, "An Exercise in Hermeneutics: Jeremiah 31:31-34," Interpretation 20 (1966): 194).

33. "For[8] this will be the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," (the declaration of Yahweh). "I will put[9] my law within them and upon their heart I will write it; and I will be God for them and they[10] will be a people for me;

34. and no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother by saying, "Know Yahweh," for[11] all of them shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest,"[12] (the

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[8] Most translations render the particle kî as "but" following Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew English Lexicon: "after a neg. kî for becomes = but (Germ. sondern)..." (kî 3 e, p.474), cf. RSV, NEB, NASB. The distance between the preceding negative and the conjunction suggests that this translation is not certain, although it makes sense in the context. The alternative understanding for the function of kî here is that it introduces a causal clause. This understanding is supported by the LXX translation of kî by hoti. Anneli Aejmelaeus shows that the causal function of kî represents a broad category including "such nuances as cause, reason, motivation and explanation" and that "the tightness and directness or looseness and indirectness of causality" varies within this category according to context ("Function and Interpretation of kî in Biblical Hebrew," Journal of Biblical Literature 105 (1986): 202). The loose causal explanatory function of kî is understood here and in the syntactical analysis that follows it has been diagrammed as such. If kî is taken as an adversative conjunction then the syntactical diagram would need to be modified to represent S3 as a relative clause coordinate with that introduced by the negative particle. The meaning of the passage is affected little which ever function of kî is understood.

[9] The perfect is strange in a context speaking of a future situation. Many manuscripts read waw-consecutive here. Bright considers this to be a "prophetic perfect" (John Bright, "An Exercise in Hermeneutics," pp.193-4).

[10] See footnote 2 above.

[11] Although unlikely, the conjunction kî could also be translated "but" here; cf. footnote 8 above.

[12] The Hebrew construction here is used "to denote comprehensively an entire class..." (min 9.b.(1), Brown, Driver, Briggs, Hebrew English Lexicon, p.583).

declaration of Yahweh) "because I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will not remember any longer."

Syntactical Analysis

Syntax Diagram[13]

The following is not an exhaustive syntactical analysis but only indicates the main sentence structures, which is sufficient to reveal the pattern of the pericope and how this pattern supports and enhances its themes. Hence the sentence identification is more detailed for the second half of the analysis since that structure appears to be more significant in terms of thematic presentation.

S1	Su.	hinnēh yāmîm	(31)
	Prd.	bā'îm	
			(n^{e}'um yhwh)
Conj.		w^{e}	

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[13] The following abbreviations, listed in order of first appearance, are used in the syntactical analysis: Su. - subject; Prd. - predicate; Conj. - conjunction; S - sentence; V - verb; Adv. - adverb; DO - direct object; N - Noun; Adj. - adjective; Rel.Cl. - relative clause; Adv.Cl. - adverbial clause.

The consonants of the Hebrew alphabet are transliterated as follows: ', b, [b], g, [g], d, [d], h, w, z, ḥ, ṭ, y, k, [k], l, m, n, s, ', p, [p], ṣ, q, r, ś, š, t, [t].

The Hebrew vowels are transliterated as follows:

a - paṯaḥ
ā - qāmeṣ
e - s^{e}gōl
ē - ṣērê
i - ḥîreq
ō - ḥōlem
o - qāmeṣ ḥāṭûp
u - qibbûṣ
ă - ḥāṭēp paṯaḥ
e - ḥāṭēp s^{e}gōl
o - ḥāṭēp qāmeṣ
e - šewā
ô - ḥōlem mālē'
î - ḥîreq yôḏ
ê - ṣērê yôḏ
û - šûreq

S2	V	kārattî
	Adv.	ʾet bêt yiśrāʾēl wᵉʾet bêt yᵉhûdāh
	DO N.	bᵉrît
	Adj.	ḥᵃdāsāh
	Rel.Cl.	
	Rel.Cl.[14]	lōʾ kabbᵉrît ʾᵃšer (32)
	V	kārattî
	Adv.	ʾet ʾᵃbôtām
	Adv.Cl.	bᵉyôm
	V	heḥᵉzîqî
	Adv.	bᵉyādām
	Adv.Cl.	lᵉ
	V	hôṣîʾām
	Adv.	mēʾereṣ miṣrāyim
	Rel.Cl.	ʾᵃšer
	V	hēmmāḥ hēpērû
	DO	ʾet bᵉrîtî
	Adv.Cl.	wᵉ
	V	ʾānōkî bāʿaltî
	DO	bām
		(nᵉʾum yhwh)
Conj.[15]		kî
S3	Top.	zōʾt (33)
	Com.	habbᵉrît
	Rel.Cl.	ʾᵃšer
	V	ʾekrōt
	Adv.	ʾet bêt yiśrāʾēl
	Adv.	ʾaḥᵃrê hayyāmîm hahēm
		(nᵉʾum yhwh)
S4AIa[16]	V	nātattî

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[14] With subordinate clauses the introductory particle has been placed opposite the clause designation with the analysis of the clause proper below.

[15] In each case the function of the particle kî is understood to be that of introducing a causal clause of some type (cf.footnote 8 above). Also A. Aejmelaeus writes,

> "The distinction between subordinate and coordinate cases is fully out of place here. Instead, one should pay attention to the logical relationship of the clauses involved, to their dependence on one another . . . ." ("Function and Interpretation of kî in Biblical Hebrew," p.202).

For this reason the clauses introduced by kî will be diagrammed as coordinate and their more precise relationships with other clauses be considered as matter for further interpretation.

[16] B. L. Bandstra writes,

> "A text is not to be viewed as a mere sequences of sentences. There is a multitude of syntactic features that cannot be adequately accounted for in a sentence grammar. Pronouns and suffixes, for the most part, are

DO		'et tôrātî
Adv.		b^{e}qirbām
Conj.		w^{e}
b Adv.		'al libbām
V+DO		'ekt^{a}bennāh
Conj.		w^{e}
IIa V		hayîtî
Adv.		lāhem
DO		lē'lōhîm
Conj.		w^{e}
b Su.+V		hēmmāh yihyû
Adv.		lî
DO		l^{e}'ām
Conj.		w^{e}
IIIa V		lō' y^{e}lamm^{e}dû (34)
Adv.		'ôd
Su.+DO		'îš 'et rē'ēhû w^{e}'îš 'et 'āhîw
Adv.		lē
V		'mōr
Obj.Cl.		
V		d^{e}'û
DO		'et yhwh
Conj.		kî
IIIb V		kûllām yēd^{e}'û
DO		'ôti
Adv.		l^{e}miqṭannām w^{e}'ad g^{e}dôlām (n^{e}'um yhwh)
Conj.		kî
B a V		'esṭaḥ
DO		la'^{a}wōnām
Conj.		ûe
b DO		l^{e}haṭṭā'tām
V		lō' 'ezkōr
Adv.		'ôd

Sentence Pattern

[ ]
S1 S1

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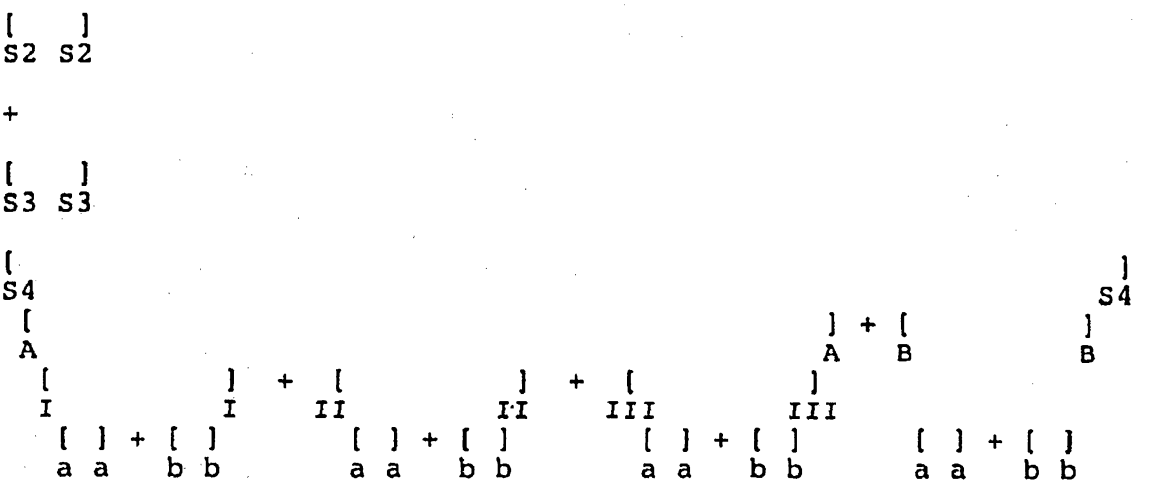
exophoric, that is, they make reference to constituents of other clauses or sentences" ("Word Order and Emphasis in Biblical Hebrew," paper presented at the 1985 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (typewritten), p.9).
This fact may explain why there is a felt tension between nātattî beginning a syntactically independent sentence (S4) and yet it appearing that logically S4 be linked to the preceding sentence (S3) containing the demonstrative pronoun which refers to it. This is especially so since the demonstrative pronoun is part of the causal clause, S3, connected to S2 and, without that to which it refers (i.e. S4), no cause is apparent.



Comments on Syntactical Analysis

The phrase <u>n^{e}'um yhwh</u> appears four times in this pericope, but has been placed in parentheses as not being part of the syntactical structure of the passage. Some useful conclusion as to its function in the passage can be drawn from a study of its usage in the immediate context, thereby limiting the data base to manageable size. The phrase (plus <u>s^{e}bā'ôt</u> in 30:8) occurs twenty four times in chapters 30-33. This high frequency is a reflection of Jeremiah's style, since the term appears with greater frequency in Jeremiah than in any other book (167 times). It is a manifestation of the emphasis found from the first in this book that the words of the prophet were not his own but those of Yahweh (cf. 1:9).

It is hard to conclude that, in this section of Jeremiah, this phrase is a marker of discrete declarations (and so part of the sentence structure), since it can be repeated at close proximity in conjoined clauses in what appear to be single oracles (e.g. 30:10-11; 31:16-17, 31-32; cf. 23:28-33). If not an indicator of discrete declarations,

the phrase, when repeated within a clause complex, must be repetitious and is probably emphatic, restressing the divinely authoritative nature of the words being presented.[17] The use of the phrase in 31:31-34 is understood in this way.

Of the twenty occurrences of the phrase in chapters 30 - 33 outside of 31:31-34, six are clearly at the beginning of an oracle, appearing immediately after a short introductory clause (30:3, 8; 31:27, 36, 38; 33:14). These clauses are usually temporal clauses and are always incomplete in themselves. The use of the phrase in 31:31 fits this pattern.

Eight of the occurrences of the phrase outside of 31:31-34 are clearly at the end of an oracle. Five of these are at the extreme end of a message (31:14, 20, 28, 37; 32:44), while at least two appear before a concluding clause, as does the phrase in 31:34. In 30:17 the last clause following n^{e}'um yhwh is a causal clause introduced by the conjunction kî, which clause can be understood as giving the grounds for the actions presented in a number of clauses immediately preceding in verses 16 and 17. It functions very much as the last clause in 31:34. The last clause of 30:22 is a compound clause consisting of two clauses joined by a waw used disjunctively and indicating contemporaneous activity. It appears to sum up the immediately preceding information in verses 18-21. Thus, in both 30:17 and 22, the phrase n^{e}'um yhwh serves to mark off a closing clause which in some way

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[17] See R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., Theological Word Book of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 2:541-2.

ties together a number of clauses immediately preceding. The recognition of this pattern here supports the analysis in similar terms of 31:34 which appears later.

The first verb in the pericope speaks of the making of a new covenant. The information about the former covenant is quite detailed. The noun referring to that former covenant has two qualifying relative clauses revealing the two parties of that covenant and their responses to one another in that relationship. Yet it should be noted that all the syntactical units speaking of the former covenant are part of a relative clause qualifying the noun referring to the new covenant, and that in negative terms, as the introductory negative particle indicates. It is the new covenant, therefore, that is the main burden of this pericope.

The division of the compound sentence of verses 33b-34b (S4A) into three subordinate compound sentences as indicated by the Roman numerals, is suggested by the tripartite thematic development of the section and is supported by the syntax. The waw is used disjunctively between the first and second clauses to indicate that the actions of these clauses are contemporaneous. The waw is used similarly between the third and fourth clauses. The waw-consecutive in verse 33 separates these double clauses and the third member of the unit, again a double clause compound sentence, is distinguished by its introduction by the negative particle.

The penultimate clause (S4AIIIb), introduced by the conjunction <u>kî</u>, is a causal clause.[18] It gives the basis for

the action of the immediately preceding clause which speaks of lack of need of teaching among the pecple of God. It does not give the basis for the actions spoken of in the first four clauses of the compound sentence (S4AIIa, b, IIa, b). It is possible to understand the prophet to mean that Israel would be his people and he their God because they knew him, as stated by the third and fourth clauses (S4AIIa, b). Yet it is virtually impossible to believe that Jeremiah was indicating that the ground for God's placing his law within Israel was their knowledge of him, as presented in the first two clauses (S4AIa, b), since logically the latter flows from the former and not vice versa. Thus the last clause of the compound sentence (S4AIIIb) cannot be considered as giving the ground for the action of the first two clauses of the set. Since this last clause stands in the same syntactical relationship to the second two clauses as to the first two, it is also likely that it does not give the ground for the action of these clauses either. Also the ready semantic pairing of the six clauses into three sets of two clauses, or three compound clauses, supports this analysis of the syntax of the last clause of the compound sentence.

The thematic divisions of the compound sentence (S4A), as supported by the syntax, are:

I. Yahweh's action of placing his law in Israel's heart.

II. The establishment of fellowship between Yahweh and Israel.

III. The common knowledge of Jahweh within Israel.

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[18] See footnote 15 above.

Such a thematic analysis reveals the basic aspect of the covenant relationship, fellowship between Yahweh and Israel, emphasized by being placed as the central member of the compound sentence, and flanked by sentences pointing first to Yahweh's renewing action on the hearts of Israel, and then to their renewed action in relationship to him.[19] The syntactic analysis as presented serves to reveal more clearly the relationship of these three themes as found in this pericope.

If the analysis of verses 33b-34b is accepted, then the final clause (S4B) stands outside that three part, six clause compound sentence. This recognition of the separation of the last clause is supported by the presence of the intervening phrase n^{e}'um yhwh, as mentioned above. Although the final clause, which, as a causal clause, could be understood as only giving the ground for the action of the last clause of the compound sentence (S4AIIIb), it can also be seen as presenting the ground for all the actions mentioned in the larger three part sentence (S4A). Semantically this would make good sense indicating that the complete forgiveness of Israel's sin as spoken of in this final clause is presented as being, in some way,[20] the cause of a common knowledge of Yahweh in the people

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[19] As will be shown in more detail later, "knowing Yahweh" should be considered as active in the context of Jeremiah, not being mere passive cognisance but active acknowledgement of him, manifesting itself in the practice of justice and righteousness (cf. 22:15-6); see pages 76-77 below.

[20] The precise nature of the causal relationship between the actions of S4B and those of S4A cannot be defined on the basis of their connection by the particle kî (see the comments in note 8 above). It is hard to see how Yahweh's forgiveness of his people's sin would cause him to give them a new heart and the other blessings promised. Rather, forgiveness is better seen as the reason for his giving the

of Israel but also of Yahweh's putting his law within them and of the establishment of covenant fellowship between him and them. The syntactical balance of the six-member, three part compound sentence would also be recognized by such an analysis.

Although further grammatical comment on the passage will appear in the paper, in summary it can be stated here that the syntax of Jeremiah 31:31-34 highlights the fact that the burden of the pericope is the new covenant. The analysis as presented shows how the focus on the new covenant is achieved. First, the new covenant is contrasted with the former, Mosaic, covevant. Second, its main features, centering on covenant fellowship between Yahweh and Israel, is represented in tripartite fashion. Finally it is shown to be related to the complete forgiveness of Israel's sin.

The Relationship Between the New Covenant and the Mosaic

In Jeremiah 31:31-34 the prophet spoke about a new covenant. He contrasted it with the Mosaic covenant. A number of elements of the new covenant were the same as those of the Mosaic covenant. Yet, being designated as "new," it was to provide for Israel a realization of the covenant relationship between them and Yahweh never experienced before. The discussion following will focus on the relationship of the new covenant to the Mosaic and on that which made the former new.

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new heart, in that forgiveness would remove the barrier to Yahweh's having anything to do with Israel. With the barrier removed, he could then provide those things needed for the permanent establishment of the relationship between him and them.

The Covenants in View

First, it should be made clear that, in this passage it is the Mosaic covenant, and not all the previous covenants between Yahweh and his people, that is in view. This should be clear from the words "the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt . . . ." (v.32). Scripture knows of no other covenant made with Israel at the time of the exodus than that made at Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab, the Mosaic covenant. It has been suggested that Jeremiah's form of reference here is not precisely to the Sinai event and so the intention was to include the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants in his contrast.[21] But Jeremiah used this type of phraseology to point specifically to the Sinai covenant. This can be seen where he has identified in the context the covenant as one entailing conditions, and those specifically of the Mosaic covenant (e.g. 7:22; 11:4-5, 7; 34:13-14). In Jeremiah 31:31-34, therefore, it was the Mosaic covenant with which Jeremiah contrasted the new.

Second, for the purpose of this paper, the term "new covenant" is used to refer exclusively to that covenant spoken

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[21] O. Palmer Robertson says,
"Although it may be said rather certainly that Jeremiah intends to refer to the covenant at Sinai by his reference to the day that God brought Israel out of Egypt, it also must be recognized that his peculiar form of reference has the effect of emphasizing the historical unity of the various covenantal relationships . . . . Jeremiah's contrast, therefore, is not simply with the Mosaic covenant. He contrasts instead the new covenant with the totality of God's covenant dealings with Israel previously" (The Christ of the Covenants (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p.281).

of in Jeremiah 31:31-34. There are those who take all the promises associated with the future relationship between Yahweh and Israel and subsume them under the heading "new covenant."[22] Although it cannot be denied that one future situation is being spoken of in the prophecies of the coming relationship between Yahweh and Israel, it appears best, when seeking to understand what was new about this covenanted relationship, to focus attention on that passage where the term "new" is used and where it is contrasted with that covenant which may be reckoned as old, even if not specifically designated thus.[23] It is also a contention of this paper that the structure and material of Jeremiah 31:31-34 present information about the future situation with unique clarity, which clarity becomes clouded when all the promises for Israel's future are brought into the picture.[24]

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[22] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. states, "This is the only place in the OT where the expression "new covenant" (31:31) occurs; however, it would appear that the concept was much more widespread." He then lists a number of passages from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Hosea as "major passages on the "New Covenant" " (Toward an Old Testament Theology, p.231). Thus Dwight Pentecost, following this principle of using related passages to obtain data on the new covenant, gives Charles C. Ryrie's listing of eleven provisions of the new covenant culled from Jeremiah and other books (Things to Come, pp.117-18). A similar approach is used by O. Palmer Robertson (The Christ of the Covenants, pp.41-43).

[23] It appears that the New Testament references to the new covenant have Jeremiah 31:31-34 in view, most being in contexts speaking of God's dealing with sin. Paul's reference to "tablets of hearts of flesh" may have Ezekiel 11:19 as its background, although that passage contains almost exactly the same information as Jeremiah 31:31-34. Certainly New Testament writers did not take up the many promises associated with the future covenant situation when speaking of the new covenant.

[24] Another problem with the "combination" approach for gathering data on the new covenant is that, because the resultant promise complex has so many features of the

It is Jeremiah 31:31-34 which stresses the new-ness of the future covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel and so it is the information of this passage which will be the concern of the discussion of the contrast of the new covenant with the Mosaic.

Similarities Between the New Covenant and the Mosaic

It is widely understood that there were striking similarities between the new and Mosaic covenants. Fredrick Holgren writes, "Almost every Old Testament interpreter recognizes that what is attributed to the "new" covenant in this passage is also present in the old Mosaic covenant."[25] This is not to say that the conditions of the Mosaic covenant

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Abrahamic and Davidic covenantal promises, there is the tendency to understand the term ḥ^{a}dāšāh as "renewed," and referring to a renewal of the promissory covenants, rather than as "new" and so stressing contrast and that which was unique. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. writes,

> "Thus the word "new" in this context would mean the "renewed" or "restored" covenant . . . . We conclude then that this covenant was the old Abrahamic-Davidic promise renewed and enlarged" (Toward an Old Testament Theology, p.234)

The meaning "renewed" is not required by the Hebrew term (cf. Ezek.36:26; Isa.65:17). In the context of usage in Jeremiah 31:31-34, "new" rather than "renew" is the better interpretation.

[25] "A New Covenant? For Whom?" The Ecumenist 22 (1984): 38. Holmgren also notes that

> "the old covenant was the religion of the heart (Dt 6:4-6; 11:18; 30:11). It also proclaimed Yahweh's choice of Israel as his people (Dt 7:6-8) -- a people to whom Yahweh granted forgiveness when it was sought with sincerity (Ps 103:6-14; 51:10-17)" (Ibid., p.40).

John Calvin writes, "It being new, no doubt refers to the form . . . . But the substance remains the same" (Commentaries on Jeremiah, vol. 4, p.127). John Bright appears to go beyond this when he says, "Though it is said to be "not like" the old covenant (vs.32), the new covenant does not differ from it in either form or content" ("An Exercise in Hermeneutics: Jeremiah 31:31-34," p.194).

had been fulfilled and its benefits enjoyed in the history of Israel just as they would be under the new. In fact the conditions of the Mosaic covenant had not been fulfilled nor its benefits fully enjoyed by Israel. This highlighted the need for a new covenant which would deal with the problem which hindered the Mosaic covenant achieving its purpose. Still, to deal with this problem, the new covenant exhibited many of the features of the Mosaic covenant. These will be considered below and, because the continuities between the two covenants are clearer in relation to some aspects rather than to others, the discussion of them will vary in length.

In the Mosaic covenant the parties were Yahweh and Israel. The stipulations of the covenant were prefaced by the words "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex.20:2). In the new covenant too Yahweh and Israel were to be the parties. It was Yahweh , identified four times in the formula $n^e'um\ yhwh$, who was to establish the covenant. This covenant was to be made with Israel as a whole, "the house of Israel" and "the house of Judah."[26] A divided Israel was not the norm for the people of Yahweh according to the prophets (Isa.11:13; Jer.50:4; Ezek.37:15-22; Hos.1:11). So it was with Israel as a whole that the new covenant, as the Mosaic, was to be made.[27]

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[26] It is generally recognized that, even if "the house of Judah" is a later addition to this oracle, the twelve tribes and not just the northern kingdom are in view here (see J. Bright, Jeremiah, p.283). Yet, as has been noted, there are no textual grounds for omitting the reference to the southern kingdom.

[27] This is not to maintain that the term "Israel" was

Further, the new covenant dealt with the same law as that in the Mosaic covenant and spoke of the same place for that law. Yahweh's declaration was, "I will put my law within them and upon their heart I will write it . . . " Yahweh's law was the Mosaic law, and in the Mosaic covenant also the place where the law was intended to be was the hearts of Israel (Deut.6:6; 11:18; cf. 6:5; 10:12, 16). Again fellowship between Yahweh and his people was a goal of the Mosaic covenant, as of the new, for Yahweh had promised Moses concerning Israel, "I will take you for my people, and I will be your God . . . ." (Ex.6:7; cf. Lev.26:12). The purpose of the Mosaic covenant as renewed was the same (Deut.29:13). Such fellowship was symbolized in Yahweh's dwelling amongst Israel in the tabernacle (Ex.25:8; 29:45; Num.5:3). It was also recognized by Jeremiah as the essence of the Mosaic covenant (Jer.7:23; 11:4). This same fellowship was presented in the terms of the new covenant. Thus, in the matters of the parties to and the law and the fellowship of the covenant, the new was to exhibit continuity with the Mosaic.

Jeremiah, in reference to the new covenant, also spoke of Israel's knowledge of Yahweh and Yahweh's forgiveness of Israel. Both these features of the new covenant were also

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to refer exclusively to those of ethnic Israel in the fulfillment of the new covenant promise. Although the term "Israel" is not used unambiguously of the church in the New Testament (but cf. Gal.6:16), it appears that believers, both Jewish and Gentile, were reckoned as being in that group stemming from the fathers (1 Cor.10:1; cf. Rom.11:17-23), called God's household (Eph.2:19) and spoken of as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Pet.2:9). Thus there are good grounds for recognizing New Testament believers as the possible referents of the Old Testament term Israel.

present in the Mosaic. A certain knowledge of Yahweh is spoken of as the result of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and in connection with the fellowship they were to enjoy in the covenant relationship (Ex.6:7 29:46; cf. 10:2). Yahweh said to Moses about Israel, ". . . you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." The formula "to know that I am Yahweh" and its use with the Egyptians (7:5; 14:4, 18) and the grumbling Israelites (16:12) as the subjects suggests that the meaning of the root yd' here is close to "recognize."[28] This may be the thought taken up in Jeremiah 31:34 and, if so, would be another continuity between the Mosaic and new covenants. Yet in Jeremiah 31:34 the verb "know" was used to speak of knowing Yahweh himself rather than some characteristic of his. Elsewhere in Jeremiah knowing Yahweh was spoken of as more than mere cognisance. Rather it was presented as active acknowledgement of him (2:8), being the opposite of acting wickedly (4:22; 9:3[2], 6[5]; cf. 1 Sam.2:12), and which manifested itself in obedience to the Mosaic covenant stipulations (22:15-16), as well as in turning to Yahweh (24:7).[29] For Jeremiah, and for the new covenant of which he spoke, this is what "to know Yahweh" meant. Such a knowledge of Yahweh, manifesting itself in care for "the afflicted and

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[28] S. R. Driver understands "know" here as meaning to "learn by what you witness and experience (that I am Jehovah, your Deliverer . . . .)" (The Book of Exodus, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p.44).

[29] "In OT usage, to "know" the Lord is not just intellectual or theoretical recognition. To know the Lord is to enter into fellowship with him and acknowledge his claims on one's life" (NIVSB, p.377).

the needy" (22:16), was to be characteristic of those under the Mosaic covenant too (Ex.22:25-25[24-26]; 23:6; Deut.24:14).[30] Knowing Yahweh in this way, then, was spoken of as integral to both the Mosaic and the new covenant.

With respect to forgiveness too there was to be continuity between the Mosaic and new covenants. This does not mean that what was said about forgiveness in connection with both was identical. Yet there were similarities which should not be overlooked and any differences between the covenants in this area should not be misconstrued. It is correct to say that "Jeremiah did not deny that sin was forgiven under the old covenant. The word used here (i.e. Jer.31:34) for 'forgive' (sālaḥ) is used throughout the Old Testament."[31] This term (sālaḥ) was used to designate what Yahweh did with respect to Israel after the incident of the golden calf (Ex.34:9) and at Kadesh Barnea (Num.19:20). sālaḥ was used by the Psalmist to speak of Yahweh's way of dealing with sin in a more general way (Ps.103:3), and it was used to desinate what was accomplished through the sacrificial system (e.g. Lev.4:20, 26; Num.15:25-26, 28). Those under the Mosaic covenant desired sālaḥ (e.g. 1 Kgs.8:30, 50; Ps.25:11; Dan.9:19; Amos 7:2) and Yahweh held out sālaḥ as a possibility

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[30] The phrase "to know Yahweh" is not found in the documents of the Mosaic covenant. This does not mean that by its use in 31:34 Jeremiah was presenting something foreign to the Mosaic covenant as the passages cited indicate. This understanding of the significance of the term is reflected in the translation "Heed the Lord" (Tanakh: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publications Society, 1985), p.839).

[31] Thomas Edward McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise, pp.87-88.

for those who turned from wickedness (2 Chron.7:14; cf. Jer.5:1). This term spoke of forgiveness that was available under the Mosaic covenant and did not appear for the first time in connection with the new covenant. Further, part of Yahweh's declaration in Jeremiah 31:34 was "their sin I will not remember" and this nonremembrance of sin by Yahweh was also not unique to the new covenant.[32] Although not mentioned specifically in the Mosaic covenant, talk of Yahweh's non-remembrance of sin appears to be not much more than another way of speaking of his forgiveness of it, as the parallelling of the terms in Jeremiah 31:34 suggests. It was not unknown to those under the Mosaic covenant who desired it (Ps.25:7; 79:8; Isa.64:9) and to whom it was held out as a possibility (Ezek.18:22; 33:16). Therefore forgiveness of inquity and non-remembrance of sin by Yahweh, like so many other aspects of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, was a part of both the Mosaic covenant and the new.[33]

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[32] T. E. McComiskey claims otherwise. "The great difference (between Mosaic and new covenants) is in the fact that God will not remember their sin" (Ibid., p.88). Such a judgment does not account satisfactorily for all the Old Testament data.

[33] Hobart E. Freeman, in his useful article "The Problem of the Efficacy of Old Testament Sacrifices," maintains that the Levitical sacrificial law of the Mosaic covenant

> "was the necessary vehicle for the actual realization of forgiveness, and for communion and fellowship between God and Israel within the Covenant . . . . Thus, from the worshiper's standpoint, and on the basis of God's own promises in Leviticus, the Mosaic sacrifices were efficacious in this two-fold sense; they maintained a covenant relationship between God and Israel, and when offered in humble faith and penitence, they secured for the worshiper a valid atonement and the forgiveness of all sins . . . ." (Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society 5 (1962), p.77).

Freeman's article, which gives helpful direction in relating

Participation in New Covenant Experiences Under the Mosaic Covenant

It is clear that Israel, as a nation, did not keep the obligations of the Mosaic covenant. Yahweh, speaking of that covenant and of the Israel of the past said, ". . . which covenant of mine they broke . . . ." (Jer.31:32). The situation was even worse in Jeremiah's day. The history of Israel had been one of breaking the Mosaic covenant. Because of this she did not enjoy the privileges of that covenant, nor of the other covenants, in any lasting way. Therefore it appeared that a new covenant was needed which would take up the terms of the Mosaic covenant and bring them to fruition, for this was the means by which Yahweh's promises were to be realized (Gen.18:19). Such a covenant was promised for Israel's future in the new covenant prophecy. Yet it can be seen from the Old Testament that there were already those under the Mosaic covenant who experienced in their lives those things promised in the new covenant -- Yahweh's law on their heart, fellowship with Yahweh, knowledge of Yahweh and forgiveness of their sin. And, if this were so, it might have been asked, What was to be so new about the new covenant?

Psalm 37 spoke of the righteous man (ṣaddîq) of whom it could be said, "The law of his God is in his heart . . . ." (v.31). He was one who showed practical concern for the needy

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Levitical principles with statements in Hebrews, correctly takes the Old Testament statements about forgiveness seriously, as can be seen in the above quotation, and also notes that the ground for such forgiveness was the later work of Christ applied prospectively.

(vv.21, 26) and who spoke of justice (mišpāṭ). Such a one, even under the Mosaic covenant, possessed those things spoken of in the new covenant promise -- Yahweh's law on his heart, fellowship with Yahweh ("his God") and that knowledge of Yahweh that manifested itself in covenant obedience (cf. Ps.15). The law of Yahweh being on the heart is confessed by others also (Ps.40:8; 119:11) and, although spoken of somewhat differently, by Jeremiah himself (Jer.15:16; cf. Ps.19:8; 118:28). Already it has been seen that knowledge of Yahweh, heeding his directives, was predicated of Josiah (Jer.22:15-16), one under the Mosaic covenant. Forgiveness too was enjoyed by some under the Mosaic covenant, important to note since forgiveness was to be the basis of the new covenant experience. So, in Psalm 32, the psalmist extolled the blessedness of the forgiven state, a state reckoned in the New Testament to be that of new covenant believers also (Rom.4:5-8). The believer under the Mosaic covenant could also sing to his "soul" of the Yahweh "who pardons (hassōlēaḥ) all your iniquities" and who removed sin far away (Ps.103:3, 12). Thus it is clear that some under the Mosaic covenant were expicitly spoken of as having participated in new covenant experiences. And, unless it is held that there was no salvation for those under the Mosaic covenant, or that the salvation of such was on a different basis or of a different kind from that presented in the New Testament, it should not be surprising to find this acknowledged. And further, unless he used terminology in a manner radically different from the way it is used elsewhere in the Old Testament, an hypothesis

with little textual support, in his prophecy of the new covenant Jeremiah did not speak of novel experiences but of those which had been confessed by Yahweh's people, even under the Mosaic covenant. Thus the question presents itself, What was new about the new covenant?

The New-ness of the New Covenant

Background: Willingly rebellious Israel restored through affliction. The focus of Jeremiah in 31:31-34 was on the nation of Israel. The new covenant was to be "with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah . . . ." As has been shown, Jeremiah contrasted that then future covenantal arrangement with the Mosaic covenant.[34] The children of Israel had been presented with a "treaty" which placed before them the conditions that needed to be fulfilled in order that the promises given to Abraham (and, later, to Phinehas and David) might be realized in their experience. Furthermore, the people had pledged themselves to obey the covenant stipulations, both before and after these had been laid down in the "Book of the Covenant." When Yahweh had called for obedience , Israel had replied, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do" (Ex.19:8 [cf. Deut.5:27]; Ex.24:3, 7). Upon the conquest of the land of Canaan they had reiterated their commitment (Josh.24:16-18, 21-24) and possibly subsequently (e.g. 2 Kgs.23:3).

Although Yahweh's people had committed themselves verbally to his covenant law, they had not kept their pledge.

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[34] See pages 71-72 above.

Jeremiah pointed to this fact in the words ". . . which covenant of mine they broke . . . ." (Jer. 31:32). Examples of their rebellion against Yahweh have been given.[35] While the fact of their rebelliousness has been seen, it is also important to recognize its source. With respect to this rebellion, it should not be thought so much that the Israelites were unable to follow Yahweh's ways as that they were unwilling to do so. The root of their rebellion was within. This rebellion was identified as being active and culpable, and was spoken of in such terms as "unbelief", "hardening of the heart" or "stiffening of the neck." Although it was only from within that true covenant obedience could come, the Israelites did not have the heart for such action (Deut.5:29 [cf. Ps.81:12-13]; Deut.29:4).[36] Early in their history as a nation Yahweh had identified them as stiffnecked (Ex.32:9; 33:3). At Kadesh Barnea he accused them of unbelief (Num.14:11; cf. Heb.3:19; 4:2). The writer of Psalm 95 called this action of Israel hardening of the heart (v.8); Nehemiah, referred to it as stiffening of the neck

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[35] See pages 47-51 above.

[36] Although the last verse says that Yahweh had not given them a heart to obey, it should not be thought that this indicated that the people were not to blame for their heart condition. They had not sought such a heart. As J. Ridderbos says,

> "The statement 'the LORD has not given you a mind . . . or eyes' . . . is not intended to excuse them but shows that their obduracy is so deep-seated that no human power can remedy it. The only remedy lies in humble prayer (cf. Jer.31:18)" (Deuteronomy, trans. by Ed M. van der Maas, Bible Student's Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), p.264).

Israel had not wanted a right heart, so Yahweh was to humble them through the covenant curse in order that they might repent and obtain such a heart from him (see pp.85-86 below).

(Neh.9:16-17). In each case unwillingness on the part of the people is clear. Later comment on their rebellious national history also reckoned them to have repeatedly stiffened their necks (2 Kgs.17:14; cf. Jer.7:26; 19:15). Nehemiah added that they had turned a stubborn shoulder (Neh.9:29). The witness is clear. The people of Israel were not pitied for their inability but condemned for their unwillingness to actually take on the obligations of the covenant, to have them on their heart, and so be in reality the people of Yahweh. Willingly they had broken their covenant pledge.

The people were unwilling to obey Yahweh even after he had used every means of persuasion to have them obey him willingly. Positively, he had used the prophets to instruct and warn, calling Israel back to the covenant relationship (2 Kgs.17:13, 15; Neh.9:29-30; Jer.7:13, 25; 11:7; 23:7; 29:19;32:33;35:14-15; 44:4). They had not responded. Negatively, he had brought the curses of the covenant on them not as a mere venting of his anger, but as a means to bring about their submission to him in the covenant relationship. The hardships of the wilderness wandering had this end in view (Deut.8:2-5) and so did Yahweh's later chastisements. Nevertheless, in spite of such chastening, Yahweh, through Amos over a century before Jeremiah's time, sadly had to repeat again and again, "Yet you have not returned to me" (Amos 4:6, 8-11). Chastening by means of the covenant curse, designed for Israel's restoration, was ineffective in bringing her to repentance and covenant obedience from the heart (cf. Isa.1:4-8; Jer.2:30; 5:3; 7:28).[37] Thus, by Jeremiah's day,

Yahweh's people had come to a point where they could no more obey than a leopard could change its markings (13:23).[38] By their persistence in covenant unfaithfulness they had exhausted Yahweh's patience as he sought to change them. As a nation they had passed the point of no return and faced the ultimate covenant curse of expulsion from the promised land (Lev.26:33; Deut.28:64-68). Because of this no prayer was to be offered on their behalf by Yahweh's spokesman (11:14; 14:11-12). In the strongest language Yahweh spoke of his rejection of the nation:

> I have forsaken my house, I have abandoned my inheritance.
> I have delivered the beloved of my soul into the hand of enemies.
> My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest.
> She raised her voice against me, therefore I hated her (Jer.12:7-8; cf. vv.9-13; 7:29).

Yahweh was "tired of relenting" concerning punishment (15:6; cf. 2 Kgs.23:26-27) and so he had withdrawn peace, lovingkindness and compassion from Israel (Jer.16:5). He was "not willing to forgive" (lislōaḥ, 2 Kgs.24:4).

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[37] It should be noted that Israel is never said to have repented. The superficial acknowledgement of sin in Numbers 14:40 cannot be called repentance, since Yahweh's new command not to enter the land was disregarded by the people. In Judges 2 the Israelites are said to have groaned because of their oppressors but it is doubtful that this was repentance since as soon as a judge died the people reverted to their apostacy. No mention of any response that could be construed as repentance is mentioned in 2 Kings 17.

[38] J. A. Thompson says of the people's condition, "In the case of Judah, deepseated wickedness, caused by centuries of schooling and repeated excursions into idolatry had made evil virtually a fixed feature of her life and behaviour. She had set herself in a permanent state of rebellion and breach of covenant" (Jeremiah, p.374).

It is important to note that, while the ultimate covenant curse of expulsion from the land and scattering among the nations came from Yahweh's just anger, it was also designed to be the final means by which the stubbornness of heart of a rebellious people was to be broken so that they would come to submit to the covenant stipulations genuinely and from the heart. This process of bringing heart renewal as a result of the operation of the covenant curse had been laid out in the covenant renewal document of Deuteronomy. On the plains of Moab the steps to the realization of the genuine covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people had been pointed out. In exile because of the operation of the final covenant judgment, Yahweh's people would remember the blessing and the curse, that which they could have experienced if obedient and that which they had because they had been otherwise (Deut.30:1). Under these conditions repentance would finally come (v.2). In response to such repentance Yahweh would restore Israel to the promised land (vv.3-5), for his promises to Abraham would not fail (e.g. Gen.12:7; 15:18-21). At last and in this way the nation would come to the proper heart condition, for Yahweh would circumcise their hearts (v.6) which would lead to obedient response to the obligations of the covenant (v.8) resulting in the realization of the covenant promises (v.9). Through the operation of the covenant curse Yahweh was to produce a people in true covenant relationship with himself. This process was not only revealed in Deuteronomy. Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, indicated that he understood the possible future for a

disobedient people similarly, although differing a little from Deuteronomy by speaking of Yahweh's forgiveness (slh) of the repentant exiles and not mentioning the circumcision of the heart (I Kgs.8:50). Still his words reflected the same basic pattern for Israel's restoration. This pattern of the covenant curse of exile leading to the establishment of the proper covenant relationship was also presented in abbreviated form in Leviticus 26:33-45 and Deuteronomy 4:26-30.

These other revelations of the means by which Yahweh was to produce a true covenant nation should be seen as background for understanding Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant. In effect Jeremiah was pointing out to those who faced the ultimate covenant curse that such a judgment was not to be the last covenant word. According to Jeremiah, the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28 and 29 was to come but it was also going to lead to the relationship of Deuteronomy 30:3-10,[39] the punishment of 1 Kings 8:46 was to come but it was also to lead to Yahweh's caring response of verses 49-50. Thus Jeremiah was not speaking of activities that had not been spoken of before but rather of those that had been spoken of before but had not yet been experienced. This does not mean that Jeremiah merely repeated what had been previously revealed. He spoke of what Yahweh had told his people before,

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[39] H. D. Potter considers that Deuteronomy does not speak of the same situation as Jeremiah 31:31-34 since verse 17 "can admit the possibility of the heart turning away" ("The New Covenant in Jeremiah XXXI 31-34," p.351). But such an objection is not valid since verse 17 relates to the first entry of the land of Canaan while verse 6 relates to a post-disobedience, post-dispersion and post-repentance situation.

yet he stressed certain aspects of the coming situation, revealing more clearly what was to be new about it.[40]

Exegesis: the new covenant oracle. Jeremiah's new covenant oracle has been set in the context of what has been called the "Book of Consolations," consisting of chapters 30-33. These chapters are generally recognized as a unit because of their common theme of the restoration of Yahweh's people. So they are seen as "The best and most complete description of Yahweh's plan of restoration . . . ."[41] Even though chapter 32 has a long section about the destruction of Jerusalem (vv.26-35), the chapter starts and ends with the theme of the return of the exiles to the land. Negative statements elsewhere in the chapters are likewise set in the context of Yahweh's eventual revitalization of his people. Thus the theme of restoration is maintained throughout. The first two chapters are mainly poetry while the latter two are prose. This stylistic consistency of chapters 30 and 31 and the obvious break in the presentation of the material at the end of chapter 31 justifies taking the first two chapters as the more immediate context for the interpretation of 31:31-34. In these chapters the future restoration is spoken of in terms alluding to the exodus from Egypt. The people of Yahweh were

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[40] E.g. previous information about the state of the returned exiles had not clearly guaranteed that the covenant curse would then have been finished forever. Jeremiah, in his oracle, made it clear that the conditions for the operation of the covenant curses would be obviated by complete and lasting forgiveness. This would have been very relevant to those facing or experiencing the covenant curse of exile.

[41] Steven M. Fettke, Messages to a Nation in Crisis: An Introduction to the Prophecy of Jeremiah (Washington: University of America Press, 1982), p.42.

to be ransomed (pdh - 31:11; cf. Deut.7:8; 2 Sam.7:23; Mic.6:4) and redeemed (g'l - 31:11; cf. Ex.6:6). Jeremiah spoke of the future in terms of freedom from oppression (30:5-8), the wilderness wanderings (31:2) and the conquest of the land (30:3; 31:5, 12, 27). It is not surprising, in the context of a "new exodus" (cf. 16:14-15; 23:7-8), to find reference to a new covenant.

By the use of the term "days are coming" Jeremiah indicated that the new covenant was to be for a future situation. Jeremiah was not the instrument for establishing the new covenant with Yahweh's people but the one to announce its future establishment. The phrase "days are coming" was not necessarily an indicator of the distant future since it was used to introduce oracles concerning the imminent destruction of Jerusalem (7:32; 19:6). In others places it clearly introduced a message about the post-exilic situation (16:14; 23:7). Thus the time frame understood in oracles so introduced depended on the context. In the context of Jeremiah 31:31-34 it was made clear that the new covenant was for the post-exilic situation (cf.30:3; 31:27, 38).[42] Now some promises in the immediate context of 31:31-34 and elsewhere in Jeremiah (and in other prophets) associated thematically with the new covenant prophecy appear to have refered to the period immediately following the exile (e.g.

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[42] The significance of the other time marker in the text, "after those days," is uncertain (see H. D. Potter, "The New Covenant in Jeremiah XXXI 31-34," p.355). It may serve to connect the new covenant prophecy with the preceding oracle of verses 27-30. If so, the new covenant prophecy would be a promise that the returnees would be confirmed in their well-being within the land.

30:3, 31:27). Yet this need not be taken as an indicator that the immediate post-exilic period was to be the time for the complete realization of all such promises or of the new covenant. Specificity of time reference was not the aim of the prophecies,[43] and so the period following the return from exile must be allowed as that time within which they were to find fulfillment.[44]

In contrasting the new covenant with the Mosaic, Jeremiah indicated that it would be new in that it would be unbreakable. The new covenant would be "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . which covenant of mine they broke . . . ." Hence, under the new covenant, the promises and blessings could be realized on a secure basis and in a permanent fashion. The terms of the new covenant revealed how it was that it would be unbreakable. The law that was meant to be on the heart of the people from the first was to be placed there by Yahweh. Covenant fellowship between him and them would be realized. They would respond to him in

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[43] The notable exception to this rule was the designation of seventy years for the captivity (Jer.25:11-12; 29:10; cf. Dan.9:2). In this case, unlike other prophecies, specificity was built into the time reference, suggesting that, where it was not, the time of fulfillment was indefinite.

[44] Steven M. Fettke sums up the question of the time of fulfillment of the new covenant prophecy in Messages to a Nation in Crisis, pp.43-44. The post-exilic history of Israel illustrates that, even in the pre-Christ period, the principle of "the already and the not-yet" was operative with respect to the promises of restoration of Israel in that there was a restoration and yet nothing like on the scale predicted by the prophets. Also, although the new covenant was inaugurated by the work of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb.9:15; 12:24), the full realization of it and the other promises associated with it remains for the comsummation spoken of in Revelation 21and 22. So even still "the already and the not-yet" principle operates with respect to the new covenant.

spontaneous covenant obedience. This new covenant situation would obtain because of the complete and permanent forgiveness of the sins of Israel. This was to be the character of the new covenant.

It is widely recognized that a premier feature of the new covenant was to be its internalization of the law.[45] As has been said, the heart of the people was where the law was meant to be from the beginning, but they had not wanted this. Because of this Israel had repeatedly broken the covenant and were to experience Yahweh's judgment. With the new covenant, Yahweh's placing of the law within the people would guarantee that this situation would not occur again.[46] This internalization of the law, precluding further breaking of the covenant relationship, would be new.

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[45] E.g. C. F. Keil says,

> ". . . the difference between the two (covenants) consists merely in this, that the will of God, as expressed in the law under the old covenant was presented externally to the people, while under the new covenant in is to become an internal principle of life" (The Prophecies of Jeremiah, vol.2, Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p.38).

Similarly Robert P. Carroll notes, "The only difference between the old and new forms of the covenant would appear to be the internalization principle employed in the new covenant (From Chaos to Covenant: Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981), p.218)

[46] It is often considered that Yahweh's writing the law on the heart is regeneration (cf. John Calvin, Jeremiah, 4:131-133). If regeneration is considered to be that which at least initiates the subjective responses in the salvation process, then identification of it with the law being placed on the heart by Yahweh should be reexamined since, at times, this type of heart change appears to be represented in the Old Testament as a post-repentance or post-confession, and hence post-regeneration, experience (e.g. Deut.30:2, cf. v.6; Ps.51:17, cf. v.10).

The aim of the Mosaic covenant was fellowship between Yahweh and his people (Ex.19:5-6). This also had not been realized under the old covenant, at least in any secure and lasting way. Thus, through Hosea, Yahweh had said to the Northern kingdom, ". . . you are not my people and I am not yours" (Hos.1:9). Through Jeremiah he was saying to Judah also, "I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brothers, all the offspring of Ephraim" (Jer.7:15; cf. 14:11-12; 15:1). Under the new covenant this was not to be the situation. Rather fellowship between Yahweh and his people was to be realized in a permanent, and hence new, way.[47]

Further, under the new covenant there would be a new spontaneous obedience from Yahweh's people. As has been pointed out, knowledge of Yahweh for Jeremiah was active acknowledgement of him by covenant obedience.[48] Under the new covenant this obedience would arise unprompted, for Yahweh had declared that "no longer shall each man teach his neighbour and each his brother by saying, 'Know Yahweh' . . . ." This may have indicated that, unlike the old covenant, the new

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[47] The permanence of the new covenant fellowship was not stated explicitly but was implied by the permanence of the forgiveness on which the relationship between Yahweh and his people was to be based and by the explicit statements of verses 35-37.

[48] See pages 76-77 above. This concept of obedience in connection with the restoration of the people of God was made more explicit in the parallel prophecies of Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-28. It is represented by the phrase "fear me" in Jeremiah 32:39, on which Gerhard von Rad comments, "Here we have only to recall that in the Old Testament the expression "the fear of God" is the equivalent of obedience to the divine will" (Old Testament Theology, vol.2, trans. by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p.215.)

covenant would have no mediators to instruct Yahweh's people. The priests had been mentioned as instructors of Yahweh's people in connection with the old covenant (Deut.17:11; cf. Mal.2:6-7). The prophets also were instructors in Yahweh's will, were from among the "brothers" (Deut.18:18) and had repeatedly called Israel back to the covenant conditions. In connection with the old covenant fathers also had been given the duty to instruct their children (Deut.6:7). Yet the phraseology "each man . . . his neighbor and each his brother" appears very general, especially in the light of similar terminology in Jeremiah 9:3-6. It spoke of the general populous, rather than specifically of prophet, priest or parent, although all would be included in the reference. In the new covenant response to Yahweh's will was to need no external encouragement or instruction, whether official or informal.

In connection with the knowledge of Yahweh which was to characterize the future Israel, a new-ness in extent was promised. Jeremiah had already stated that knowledge of Yahweh had been evident under the old covenant in one like Josiah (Jer.22:16).[49] But in this new covenant prophecy his

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[49] There had always been some, albeit at times very few, amongst Yahweh's people who had experienced the blessing of the covenant relationship, e.g. Moses (Ex.32:10), Caleb and Joshua (Num.14:24, 30), Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 2:12), 7,000 in Elijah's time (1 Kgs.19:18); cf. pages 79-81 above. The reason for this experience of a proper relationship with Yahweh must have been a genuine trust in Yahweh (cf. Num.14:24; Heb.3:18-19; 11:23-29). The nation should have exercised such faith as well but chose not to. For this reason they had to experience the covenant curse. This was to bring them to the place of submission to Yahweh and of the new covenant experience. (For further discussion of this last point see pages 85-86 above.)

focus of attention was the nation as a whole. By merismus he indicated that within Israel knowledge of Yahweh would be universal, "from the least of them to the greatest." This was certainly to be a contrast with the condition of Israel in Jeremiah's own day, as his use of the same merismus to describe Israel's sin showed (6:13; 8:18; cf. 42:1, 8; 44:12). It was to be a contrast with the Israel of the old covenant period as a whole. Thus this universal extension of the knowledge of Yahweh in Israel, and, by implication, the universal extension of the other new covenant experiences as well, was to be another new feature of the future relationship between Yahweh and his people. It is important not to overlook this aspect of the new-ness lest it be thought that Jeremiah was presupposing that no Old Testament believer had participated in the experiences spoken of in the new covenant prophecy. The Old Testament testimony is that there were those that had.[50] It was to be a new thing that all Yahweh's people would be thus.

That on which the promised new conditions of the new covenant were to be based was forgiveness. Jeremiah indicated this foundational nature of the future forgiveness in a causal clause concluding the new covenant oracle.[51] This

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[50] See pages 79-81 above.

[51] The relationship between the clauses of verses 33 and 34 should be noted carefully (see Syntactic Analysis, pages 62-65 above). H. D. Potter writes, "In order for God to forgive he must erase the sin written on the heart and replace it with the law" ("The New Covenant in Jeremiah XXXI 31-34," p.352). Similarly Robert P. Carroll says, "A further effect of such an arrangement (i.e. internalization of the law) will be the divine forgiveness of the nation's sins" (From Chaos to Covenant, p.218). In both these cases the ground for forgiveness is reckoned as being Israel's changed heart

forgiveness was to be new on at least two counts. First, it was forgiveness for a nation that had past the point of no return in her relationship with Yahweh. She had repeatedly gone against Yahweh's word and could expect no forgiveness (Jer.15:6; 16:5). In this it was as if the nation had committed the "sin of the high hand," sin directly against Yahweh's word and for which there was no sacrifice nor forgiveness (Num.15:30-31). Israel had been warned about such sin after the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea, at which time she had not been destroyed because of the intercession of Moses (14:13-20). But now no such intercession would avail (Jer.15:1-4). The nation was to be removed from Yahweh's sight (7:15; 15:1). Yet, in connection with the new covenant forgiveness was promised to such a nation, an unprecedented action on Yahweh's part. There was to be a forgiveness for Israel, new in the extent of its gracious condescension. Second, this forgiveness of the nation was to be permanent. Yahweh said, ". . . I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will not remember any longer."[52] Here was an assurance that the ground for the operation of the covenant curses was to be removed forever, the promise of a new action by and attitude of Yahweh which would usher in a new relationship

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condition. In fact Jeremiah was stating the opposite as is recognized by Thomas Edward McComiskey, who writes of this forgiveness,

> "This gracious promise is connected to the foregoing material by the particle ki (for) and establishes the basis on which God will effect the inward change of heart by which they become God's people" (The Covenants of Promise, p.87).

[52] For the use of the construction lo' + V + 'od to denote permanent negation see Genesis 8:21; Jeremiah 31:29; Ezekiel 16:63.

between him and his people. There was to be a forgiveness for Israel, new in its permanence.

What was the relationship of repentance to this new forgiveness promised by Jeremiah? It has been thought that this passage

> . . . promises a golden future and a new covenant without repentance and envisages a period when there will be no need for such moral change by the people because Yahweh will change them automatically . . . .[53]

On this ground the new covenant prophecy has been reckoned as reflecting a non-prophetic spirit and thus is not attributable to Jeremiah.[54] Such a conclusion should not be too hastily drawn. Silence concerning repentance in this passage does not mean that it was not presupposed, for it should not be expected that each revelation about Israel's future state had to include all details of that future. Repentance was spoken of elsewhere as that which would precede restoration of Yahweh's people, whether mentioned in connection with Yahweh's acting on the heart of Israel (Deut.30:6; cf. Jer.31:33) or in connection with the forgiveness of Israel's sin (I Kgs. 8:50; cf. Jer.31:34). As humble repentance was to be the means of restoration for the individual, so also for the nation (Ps.51:17; cf. Lev.26:41). In the immediate context of the prophecy of the new covenant repentance was understood to precede the restoration of the nation (Jer.31:18-20).[55] In the light of these facts it is best to understand that

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[53] Robert P. Carroll, From Chaos to Covenant, p.220.

[54] Ibid., p.220.

[55] Carroll recognizes this reference to repentance preceding restoration but reckons it to be from a source other than that of the new covenant prophecy (see ibid.).

repentance on the part of Yahweh's people as the step before their forgiveness and restoration is presupposed by the new covenant prophecy.

While repentance should be recognized as the presupposed prerequisite for the forgiveness of Jeremiah 31:34, such repentance should not be seen as the meritorious grounds for the forgiveness of Yahweh's people.[56] Because of this the new covenant was not to be of the promissory type, granted to recipients as a reward for outstanding service.[57] Repentance was not such service, nor could there be any other in view but rather only the previous disservice of a disobedient nation. On the other hand, the new covenant was similar to the promissory covenant type in that all obligation fell upon Yahweh, the initiator of the covenant, although, paradoxically, in order that the Mosaic covenant obligations of Israel, the recipient, might be fulfilled. The promissory character of the new covenant, not in the context of outstanding service by its beneficiaries, indicated the graciousness of Yahweh who was to establish it. This also showed that it was to be a new covenant in the extent of its graciousness.

Conclusion

The preceding chapter has presented a number items of continuity between the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant of

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[56] With respect to the future restoration of Yahweh's people, Ezekiel explicitly stated that Yahweh's action was not to find its motivation in anything in the people (Ezek.36:22, 32).

[57] See page 17 above.

Jeremiah 31:31-34. While these items were the same in both covenants, their continuity from the Mosaic to the new covenant lay in the fact that they were presented in the terms of both covenants and not because they found the same expression during the period of operation of the Mosaic covenant as they were to do in the period of operation of the new covenant.

With respect to this continuity, both covenants presented the parties to the covenant as Yahweh and a whole Israel, the law of the covenant as Yahweh's law, meant for the heart of Israel, and the response to the covenant as obedience to Yahweh's will, termed knowledge of Yahweh in Jeremiah 31:34. Connected with both covenants was Yahweh's forgiveness or forgetting of Israel's sin.

The chapter has shown that there was participation in these experiences by some who lived under the Mosaic covenant. This meant that the experiences of the new covenant, in some ways, were not to be novel nor unprecedented. Because of the continuities between the covenants and the participation in the new covenant experiences by some under the Mosaic covenant the question was raised, What was to be new about the new covenant?

To answer this question, the process for bringing about the restoration of a rebellious Israel as outlined in passages such as Deuteronomy 30:1-10 and 1 Kings 8:46-50 was considered as background to Jeremiah 31:31-34. It was seen that the nature of Israel's fault under the Mosaic covenant was their willing rejection of that covenant. Also Yahweh's

stated process for bringing such an Israel into covenant submission to him was the application of the covenant curses, ultimately leading to the exile of Israel. It was this judgment of the exile which was to be the means of a now repentant Israel's restoration into a "new-covenant" relationship.

It was maintained that Jeremiah 31:31-34 spoke of the same restoration situation as Deuteronomy 30 and 1 Kings 8, although stressing those features of that situation which were to be new in Israel's national experience. More detailed exegesis showed that the new covenant was to be for a post-exilic period, although not necessarily immediately post-exile. This covenant was to be new in relation to the Mosaic covenant in that, for the nation of Israel, Yahweh's law would be internalized, fellowship with him lasting and obedience to him unprompted, either informally or formally, and universal within the nation. The forgiveness on which the covenant was to be founded was to be new also in that it would be for a nation beyond the Mosaic covenant means of forgiveness, and would be complete and lasting. Such a covenant, unlike the Mosaic, would be unbreakable, and so new in this respect as well.

Finally it was shown that, although the repentance of Israel was not mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31-34, it was most likely presupposed, being in both the background material and immediate context. In this respect the new covenant was to be unlike the promissory type of covenant since there was to be nothing in the recipient, Israel, motivating its

establishment. On the other hand, as with the promissory covenants, the new covenant was to place all obligation on the initiator of the covenant, Yahweh. Thus the new covenant was shown to be new also in the graciousness of its character in that, motivated by nothing in the recipient, Israel, Yahweh was to make with her a covenant in which all obligation was on him alone, thereby enabling Israel to meet the obligations of the Mosaic covenant and so experience true covenant fellowship.

CHAPTER IV

THE COALESCENCE OF THE COVENANTS

Introduction

This chapter considers the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 as part of a larger complex of promises found in Jeremiah (and in other prophets), which related to the future of Israel in her relationship with Yahweh. The presence of this larger complex and the unity of the new covenant prophecy with it is revealed by correlating some of the verbal and conceptual similarities that occur both in Jeremiah 31:31-34 and other sections of Jeremiah. On the basis of these similarities, a larger picture of the promises for Israel's future is presented.

To maintain this paper's use of the term "new covenant" exclusively as a designation of the arrangement between Yahweh and his people as revealed in Jeremiah 31:31-34,[1] the term "covenant-promise complex" is used in the following discussion to refer to the promises as a whole.[2] A comparison of the

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[1] See pages 72-73 above.

[2] O. Palmer Robertson provides another useful alternative designation for the promises as grouped together. He writes,

> "because of its unique role in gathering together the various strands of covenantal promise throughout history, this last of God's covenants may be designated as <u>the</u>

promissory covenants with this covenant-promise complex seeks to show that the promises of the former were reiterated in the latter. Following this there is an examination of the logical relationship between the new covenant prophecy, with its focus on obligation neglect forgiven and obligation fulfilling established, and the covenant-promise complex, as containing promises to be realized because of the obligation-meeting character of the new covenant. A continuity between the obedience/blessing nexus of the previous covenants and that of Israel's promised future is thus perceived.

To conclude, a consideration of New Testament data relating to the new covenant looks for features of that covenant in the gospel message, for its inauguration in the work of Christ and for the possibilities of present and future realizations of the promises connected with it.

The New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and the "Book of Consolation"

A number of features of the new covenant or matters associated with it revealed in Jeremiah 31:31-34 are reflected in other sections of Jeremiah 30-33. In those sections outside Jeremiah 31:31-34 these features were joined in context with other promises which were, in turn, repeated elsewhere in the overall section. This formed a larger complex of promises which were to be brought to fulfillment in conjunction with one another.

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covenant of consummation" (The Christ of the Covenants, p.272).

The features of the new covenant prophecy and the connections in the "Book of Consolation" with them can be summarized as follows:

1. The concept of the law on the heart of Yahweh's people was taken up in 32:39-40. There, in the context of verses 37-44, it was connected with return to the land and with Yahweh doing them good there. In fact it was said here that Yahweh was to bring upon his people all the good previously promised to them. This good was symbolized by trading in real estate.
2. Fellowship between Yahweh and his people was reflected in similar terminology in 30:22. There it was connected with restoration in the land, punishment of the oppressors of Yahweh's people and information about their future leader (vv.18-21). This theme was also taken up in 31:1 and connected with punishment of the oppressors of Israel (cf. 30:23-24), and in 32:38, where it was connected with the promise return of Yahweh's people and a number of other promises (cf. No.1).
3. The promise of forgiveness of Israel's sin was repeated in 33:7. In the context of verses 6-13 this aspect of the new covenant promise was connected with the rebuilding of the nation, joy in the people of God and their complete restoration.
4. The theme of the house of Israel and the house of Judah united also appears in 30:3, where it was connected with the return of God's people, in 30:8, connected with the future

leadership of Israel by David (cf. v.9) and in 33:7 (see comments on 33:8 in No.3).

Taking all these interconnections into account, it can be seen that within Jeremiah 30-33 a post-exilic situation was spoken about[3] in connection with the covenant-promise complex of which the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-4 was a basic aspect. In this post exilic situation Israel and Judah were to participate together.[4] Then they would have been chastised by foreign oppression[5] for their sin, but now delivered from the oppressors who were to be punished.[6] Yahweh's people would be brought from the lands where they had been exiled[7] and restored to their land.[8] Their relationship with Yahweh would one of fellowship[9] and service.[10] Then they would have repented of their sin[11] and have been forgiven.[12] Yahweh's law would be internalized[13] and all would know[14] and fear Yahweh.[15]

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[3] 30:3, 8; 31:1, 17, 27, [31, 38].

[4] 30:3, [4, 10]; 31:2, 31; 32:30; 33:7, 14.

[5] 30:5-7, 11-15; 31:15; 32:28-35; 33:4-5, 10.

[6] 30:7-8, 11, 16, 20, 23-24; 31:11.

[7] 30:10; 31:8, 10, 16; 32:37.

[8] 30:3; 31:17, 23; 32:37, 42-44; 33:7, [11, 26].

[9] 30:22; 31:1, 11, 33; 32:38.

[10] 30:9.

[11] 31:18-19.

[12] 31:34; 33:8

[13] 31:33.

[14] 31:34.

In the land Yahweh's people were to live under a Davidic king, who would rule righteously and justly,[16] and the Levitical priesthood would be restored.[17] Israel was to enjoy security in the land,[18] rebuilding successfully,[19] reestablishing agriculture[20] and multiplying.[21] Yahweh would be doing them good.[22] They would rejoice and praise Yahweh in this situation,[23] which the nations would see with fear.[24]

The New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Other Promises in Jeremiah

Although Jeremiah 30-33 is called the "Book of Consolation" because of its clear positive note contrasting with the generally negative tone of the other chapters of Jeremiah, the rest of the book also had positive messages scattered throughout it. These promises related to the future condition of Yahweh's people and can be seen to be part of the covenant-promise complex by recognition of the same verbal and conceptual similarities that were observed as connecting links

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[15] 32:19.

[16] 30:9, [21]; 33:15, 17, 21-22, 26.

[17] 33:18, 21-22.

[18] 30:10; 33:16.

[19] 30:18; 31:4, 38-40.

[20] 31:5, 12, 14; 33:12-13.

[21] 30:19.

[22] 32:41.

[23] 30:19; 31:4, 12-13; 33:10-11.

[24] 33:9.

between the new covenant prophecy and the rest of the "Book of Consolation."

Much of what was promised in the "Book of Consolation" also found expression in other parts of Jeremiah. Yahweh's people, both Israel and Judah,[25] were to return to Yahweh,[26] their prayer now being heard.[27] Their oppressors would be punished[28] and there would be a restoration of the people to the land promised to the fathers and to Zion as a focal point in the land.[29] Then there would be rebuilding of the destruction[30] and multiplication of the people[31] in security.[32] Now there would be proper leadership of the people, especially by a Davidic king.[33] A heart to know Yahweh would be given the people, and fellowship between him and them established,[34] their sin forgiven[35] and an

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[25] 3:18; 50:4; cf. 31:31. The first references given in the footnotes to this section indicate where a theme is found outside of Jeremiah 30-33 and the final references give representative passages where the same theme is found in the "Book of Consolation." By this means the connections between the passages are established, showing that together they comprise one complex of promises relating to that future situation to which the new covenant was to belong.

[26] 3:14; 24:7; 50:4; cf. 31:19.

[27] 29:12-13.

[28] 46:28; 50:18; cf. 30:11.

[29] 3:14, 18; 16:15; 23:3, 8; 24:6; 27:22; 29:14; 46:26; 50:5, 19; cf. 30:3.

[30] 24:6; cf. 30:18.

[31] 3:16; 23:3; cf. 30:19.

[32] 23:4-6; 46:27; cf. 30:10.

[33] 3:15; 23:4-6; cf. 33:15, 17-18.

[34] 24:7; cf. 31:33-34.

everlasting covenant made with them.[36] In these respects the promises in the rest of Jeremiah reflected the same picture as chapters 30-33.

Yet some additional promises concerning Israel's future were presented in the material outside the "Book of the Consolation." The period of the exile was given as seventy years,[37] indicating that the start of the fulfillment of the promises associated with the new covenant was very specific. The return from the exile was to be a new exodus, a fact alluded to in the "Book of Consolation" but stated more clearly outside it.[38] The return was to replace the exodus from Egypt as the key salvation history event in the memory of Yahweh's people. Jeremiah also spoke of the ark of the covenant being replaced by Jerusalem as the throne of Yahweh.[39] As with the exodus from Egypt, the ark, associated with that exodus, was not going to be remembered by Yahweh's people in the future. The original aim of such a proclamation was to turn the people of Jeremiah's day from trust in the externals of Yahwism.[40] Yet it also revealed that the future

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[35] 50:20; cf.31:34.

[36] 50:5; cf. 32:40.

[37] 25:12; 29:10.

[38] 16:14-15; 23:7-8; cf. 31:2.

[39] 3:16-17.

[40] C. F. Keil explains that Jeremiah's
". . . immediate aim is to clear away the false props of their confidence from a people that set its trust in the possession of the temple and the ark, and further to show it that the presence of the temple and the ark will not protect it from judgment . . . ."(The Prophecies of Jeremiah, 1:95).

relationship between Yahweh and his people would be new. With Jerusalem, rather than the holy of holies, being the throne room of Yahweh, all Yahweh's people would have open access to him as they did not under the Mosaic covenant. Futhermore, in this passage there was a positive message with respect to the nations. Just as there was to be a gathering of Israel, so also the nations would be gathered to Yahweh's throne.

Now Jeremiah's messages concerning the nations were generally negative (e.g. chs. 46-51), but so were his prophecies concerning Yahweh's people. Yet his commission to the nations was to build and plant as well as to pluck up, break down, destroy and overthrow (cf. 1:10). Through the prophetic word of 3:17 he was performing the former tasks, and this positive note is reflected elsewhere in his prophecy. In 12:14-17 he prophesied that the nations who lived as Yahweh's people did and worshiped him[41] would prosper amongst Yahweh's people. Elsehwere he spoke of a day when nations would come to Yahweh confessing the impotence of their own gods (16:19). In Jeremiah a hope was held out for the nations as well as for Israel.[42] Thus, in addition to what was revealed in the "Book of Consolation," Jeremiah prophesied that the future for Israel was to be one of new intimacy with Yahweh in the

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[41] i.e. the nations would swear "As Yahweh lives." J. A. Thompson points out, "To affirm an oath with the words as Yahweh lives implies that the person making the oath worships Yahweh" (Jeremiah, p.361).

[42] This same hope for the nations appears to have been presented in the "Book of Consolation," although not as clearly. In 33:9 Jeremiah speaks of the nations fearing and trembling, which probably means ". . . to shake and tremble for joy . . . ." at the possibility of being included in the new blessing that Israel was enjoying (C. F. Keil, The Prophecies of Jeremiah, 2:68; cf. Ps.40:3; Hos.3:5).

covenant relationship between him and his people, and one in which the nations might also participate.[43]

The Covenant-Promise Complex and the Promissory Covenants

In Chapter I the promissory covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David were examined. Their unconditional promises were observed, although the need for obedience for the realization of these promises in the experience of Yahweh's people was also recognized. The promises given in or associated with the promissory covenants were as follows:

1. In connection with the Abrahamic covenant it was promised that Abraham's descendants were (a) to be a great nation (Gen.12:2), to be multiplied (13:16, 15:4-5; 17:2, 4-6) and to come through Sarah (17:16, 19, 21; 18:10:13-14; cf. 21:12); (b) to possess the land of Canaan (12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:8); (c) to be a blessing to the nations (12:2-3; 18:18;

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[43] The covenant-promise complex could be expanded further by including in it those promises for Israel's future given in other prophetic books. Again the connection between the promises of Jeremiah and those elsewhere could be made on the basis of verbal and conceptual similarities between them. In this way the picture of the promised future condition of Israel would be greatly increased in detail; e.g. the character of the nation under the future reign of the Davidic king by Isaiah 11:1-16; the nature of Israel's future protection from opponents by Ezekiel 38-39. Yet, in principle, the same framework as recognized in Jeremiah would appear. That which was being predicted by the other prophets was the realization of the promises of the promissory covenants, as by Jeremiah. The breadth of the promise complex is well recognized (see J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come, pp.117-118; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Old Testament Theology, pp.233-234; O. Palmer Robertson, The Christ of the Covenants, pp.274-278; Thomas Edward McComiskey, The Covenants of Promise, pp.80-91). Constraints of time and space preclude a correlation of all the prophetic data relating to the future of Yahweh's people.

22:18); (d) to be delivered from Egypt (15:13-14, 16); (e) to experience fellowship with Yahweh (17:7-8); and (f) to be secure in the face of opposition (12:3; 22:17). A number of these promises were repeated to Isaac[44] and to Jacob.[45]

2. In the covenant with Phinehas Yahweh promised him a perpetual priesthood for his descendants (Num.25:13).
3. In the covenant with David Yahweh promised him a continuing dynasty (2 Sam.7:12-16).

These promises were never abrogated. Some had been realized in part in Israel's history, but they had never fully come to fruition in the experience of Yahweh's people. All these promises connected with the former promissory covenants can be recognized as being taken up in the covenant-promise complex outlined above, although some more obviously than others. Thus, in the covenant-promise complex, it was the offspring of Abraham through Sarah that was in view (Jer.30:3).[46] They were to be multiplied (30:19). For them the deliverance from Egypt would be reenacted (16:14-15) and the land repossessed (30:3). There fellowship with Yahweh would be experienced (30:22) and security from opponents enjoyed (30:8; 46:27). Although not explicitly stated, it was implied that the promise of Abraham's offspring being a

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[44] Multiple descendants (Gen 24:6, 35:11; 46:3); possession of the land (26:3); being a blessing (26:4); fellowship, at least on a personal level (26:24).

[45] Multiple descendants (Gen.28:14; 35:11; 46:3); possession of the land (28:13; 35:12); being a blessing (28:14); deliverance from Egypt (46:4); fellowship and security, at least on a personal level (28:15).

[46] The references given in this section are only examples of those which could be given.

blessing to the nations would also be fulfilled (3:17; 12:16; 33:9). In these ways the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham was shown to be a certainty for Israel's future.

The promises of the Levitical and Davidic covenants were also taken up in the covenant-promise complex. With respect to Israel's future Yahweh's word was, "David shall never fail to have a man to sit upon the throne of Israel, nor will the priests, who are Levites, ever fail to have a man to stand before me . . . ." (Jer.33:17 NIV).

It is true that the promises of these previous covenants were expanded in their reiteration in Jeremiah. For example, the promises concerning the repossession of the land included details concerning rebuilding which could not have been present in the original promise to Abraham (see 31:38-40). The nature of the rule of the Davidic king was also more fully explained than in the original covenant promise, no doubt to contrast that future perfect reign with those of the corrupt and unfaithful rulers of Jeremiah's time (see 33:15-16). Yet the promises associated with the new covenant were unmistakeably the same as those presented in the promissory covenants. Israel's future was to be the time for the realization of the promises of the previous covenants between Yahweh and his people.[47]

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[47] O. Palmer Robertson sums up the evidence thus: "Essentially it may be said that the future age is characterized by the prophets as having a covenantal structure, corresponding to the whole of the Lord's past dealings with his people" (The Christ of the Covenants, p.278).

The Covenant-Promise Complex and the New Covenant Prophecy

It has been seen that the realization of the promises of the promissory covenants was to depend upon fulfillment of obligations set out in detail in the Mosaic covenant. This was especially emphasized in Genesis 18:17-19. There it was said that Yahweh would bring about for Abraham what he had promised for him by means of Abraham's household keeping the way of Yahweh by doing what was right and just.[48] Concerning the implications of verse 19 it was concluded that it

> indicates that Yahweh's means for the realization of the Abrahamic promise was to be through the obedience of those who were, in Abraham's name and as his offspring, to inherit them.[49]

This principle was seen to be true with respect to the Levitical and Davidic covenants as well.[50] The realization of of promise was by means of fulfillment of obligation.

Furthermore, it was seen that the testimony of a number of passages of the Old Testament was that Israel had not met the obligations involved in the relationship between her and Yahweh.[51] With this judgmentt Jeremiah was seen to concur.[52] Therefore it was concluded,

> . . . for Jeremiah, as for other authors of Scripture, the Mosaic covenant had never been genuinely adhered to nor its conditions met, neither in the past nor in his own day. It was in such a context that he prophesied of the new covenant.[53]

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[48] See pages 29-32.

[49] Page 31 above.

[50] See pages 33-41 above.

[51] See pages 46-51 above.

[52] See pages 51-57 above.

The covenant-promise complex revealed that in Israel's future the promissory covenants were to find their realization in Israel's experience. In considering this, the relationship of the new covenant promises of Jeremiah 31:31-34 to the rest of the promise complex can be better understood. In Israel's future the principle that promise would only be realized where the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people were fulfilled was not abrogated. Yahweh's planned means for bringing about for Abraham what he had promised for him were not to be changed. Rather, the promises of the promissory covenants were to be realized because that which hindered their realization previously was to be removed and that which was a prerequisite for their realization was to be fulfilled. Yahweh's declaration was, "I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will not remember any longer" (Jer.31:34). The guilt of all failure to meet the covenant obligations was to be removed. Also the obedience needed by Yahweh's people would be provided for them. For Yahweh had also declared, "I will put my law within them and upon their heart I will write it . . . all of them shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest . . . ." (31:33). The continuing meeting of the covenant obligations was guaranteed. Because of this new forgiveness and new obedient condition for Israel, the promises of the covenants were to be realized at last.[54] Thus the new covenant prophecy revealed the grounds

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[53] See pages 56-57 above.

[54] There appears to be one exception with respect to the promises for Israel's future depending on prior forgiveness and the establishment of the new covenant for their realization. The promise of deliverance from exile,

for the realization of the promises by the means that Yahweh had intimated from the beginning. Although, for the sake of clarity, this paper has not done so, the whole covenant-promise complex might be reckoned as new, not because the promises had not been given before but because they were to find a fulfillment that was to be new in that it had never been experienced before. Yet ultimately the new-ness remained in the promises of Jeremiah 31:31-34, for here was presented the new cause, the forgiveness of sin and the provision of a spontaneous obedience, on which the new result of promises realized was to rest. It was still to be true that the realization of promise was by means of fulfillment of obligation. Only now the ability to fulfill obligation was to be given by Yahweh to Israel.

It is important to observe that the only promise of the covenant relationship from the past repeated in the new covenant prophecy was that of fellowship between Yahweh and the offspring of Abraham (cf. Gen.17:7-8). Both the placing of the law on the heart and the active acknowledgement of Yahweh, two parts of the tripartite new covenant promise, were obligations of the people under the Mosaic covenant (cf. Deut.6:6; 11:18, 22).[55] In the new covenant prophecy, where

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while corresponding to the promise of deliverance from Egypt associated with the Abrahamic covenant, was, like that former deliverance, to precede a covenant establishment and, therefore, not to depend upon such a covenant inauguration for its realization. Thus the people's return to the land was associated with the new covenant, but as a precursor and not as a result.

[55] It is best to understand the promised forgiveness not as part of the new covenant itself but as the ground on which the new covenant was to be based; cf. pages 69-70 above.

the basis for the eventual realization of all the previous promises was given, that of communion between Yahweh and Israel stood as representative of all the others. This suggests that the essence of the covenant relationship was this fellowship between Yahweh and his people. The focus on this aspect also at the establishment of the Mosaic covenant tends to confirm this conclusion (cf. Ex.19:5-6). It was this communion that lay at the heart of the covenant, whether old or new.[56] Where the promise of fellowship between Yahweh and his people was realized all other promises were guaranteed of eventual realization.

The New Covenant, The Covenant-Promise Complex and the New Testament

By the time of the New Testament Israel had before her the record of the promises of the promissory covenants and of the failure of the realization of these in the experience of Yahweh's people due to lack of fulfillment of the obligations of the relationship between them and him. Also, in Jeremiah 31:31-34, they had a prophecy that the lack of fulfillment of obligation was to be forgiven and that the ability to fulfill the obligations was to be given to Abraham's offspring, which experiences were understood from context to be post-repentance. With these would be the establishment of a lasting covenant fellowship between Yahweh and Israel.

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[56] The clause presenting the provision of fellowship between Yahweh and his people being centrally placed in the structure of the new covenant prophecy also points to its unique importance; see "Syntactical Analysis," pages 69-70 above.

Furthermore, there was a complex of promises reiterating those of the previous covenants, and the indication that these would come to fruition in connection with Israel being given the ability to live out Yahweh's instructions, the obligations of the relationship. Finally, Abraham's family, the children of Israel, had returned to the land of Canaan, the locational prerequisite for the establishment of the new covenant and the start of the realization of the promises connected with it (Jer.29:10; cf. 2 Chron.36:22-23; Ezr.1:1-4). But little of that which had been promised in the covenant-promise complex had been realized in the experience of Israel since their return.[57] A number of key elements in the New Testament record indicate that it was in the work of Jesus Christ that the new covenant was inaugurated.

Repentance and Forgiveness

That repentance was a prerequisite of forgiveness was presupposed by the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34. Such repentance was proclaimed from the first in connection with the coming of Jesus Christ. It was the primary component of the preaching of John the Baptist (Mk.1:4; Lk.3:3). His call to repentance was because of the near approach of the kingdom of heaven (Matt.3:2). He called for a repentance that showed itself in deeds (Lk.3:8, 10-12; cf. Deut.30:2), for being the physical offspring of Abraham in itself brought no security (Lk.3:8). The message of Jesus followed the same

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[57] For a brief summary of the limits of the fulfillment of the promises in the post-exilic community see Steven M. Fettke, Messages to a Nation in Crisis, pages 43-44.

pattern (Matt.4:17; Mk.1:15). He had come specifically to call sinners to repentance (Lk.5:32), warned against its neglect (13:3, 5) and sent out the twelve to preach similarly (Mk.6:12). Thus the call to repentance was prominent in the ministries of John and Jesus.

Repentance, leading to forgiveness, was in the forefront of the message of the apostles as well. Part of their commission from the risen Jesus was that ". . . repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk.24:47 NIV). Thus they preached. After receiving the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, Peter called the conscience-awakened Jews and proselytes to repentance as a forerunner to forgiveness (Acts2:38), and did so again later in the temple (3:19).[58] Just as this repentance was proclaimed by the apostle to the Jews so it was also by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. He spoke of repentance to the philosophers in Athens (17:30), reminded the Ephesian elders that repentance had been a major part of his message (20:21) and confessed before Agrippa that he had preached repentance to Jew and Gentile alike (26:20). The call to repentance leading to forgiveness was prominent, then, in the apostolic preaching. Thus, just as repentance and forgiveness were to be pre-requisites for the new covenant experience according to

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[58] It is note-worthy that, in these "sermons," repentance and the accompanying forgiveness was proclaimed as precursors of blessing from God, whether the reception of the Holy Spirit (2:38) or times of refreshing from him (3:20). Thus the relationship between forgiveness and blessing here followed the same pattern as that between forgiveness and the realization of the blessings of the covenant-promise complex in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah, so they were proclaimed as prerequisites for the experiences of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The New Covenant

The New Testament data indicates that the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was inaugurated by the work of Jesus Christ. In his word of institution at the Lord's Supper, Christ indicated that, by his death, the new covenant promised in Jeremiah was to become operative. Before passing the cup he said, "This is the new covenant in my blood which is poured out for you" (Lk.22:20 NIV; cf. 1 Cor.11:25). By metonomy he thus indicated that that which was to make the new covenant a reality was his blood which was about to be shed, just as it had been the shedding of blood that had sealed the Mosaic covenant (Ex.24:6, 8). In Matthew's account it is made clear that the blood of Jesus was to be shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matt.26:28), a principle consistent with that presented by Jeremiah that the basis of the new covenant was to be the forgiveness of sins (Jer.31:34).[59] Thus the words of institution at the Lord's Supper testify to the fact that the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was to be inaugurated by the death of Jesus Christ.

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[59] The word for "forgive" in the new covenant prophecy was sālaḥ, one closely associated elsewhere with sacrifice as the means of forgiveness (cf. Lev.4:20, 26, 31, etc.; Num.15:25, 26, 28). This word association may have implied in Jeremiah that the forgiveness spoken of in the new covenant prophecy was to be based on sacrifice. Certainly New Testament data supports such a correlation between new covenant and sacrifice for the forgiveness on which it was based.

The writer to the Hebrews wished to stress the superiority of Jesus and his ministry to any ministry that had preceded, whether angelic or human. He contrasted the high-priesthood of Aaron with that of Christ, as a high-priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb.5:1-7:28). He contrasted the sacrifices of the Mosaic covenant with the sacrifice of Christ (8:1-10:18). In this latter contrast the writer connected the work of Christ with the new covenant. Jesus was the mediator of this covenant (8:6; 9:15; 12:24) and his blood was the blood of the covenant (10:29), an echo of the language of the Mosaic covenant which the new was replacing (Ex.24:7; cf. Matt.26:28). Unlike the transient Mosaic covenant, the new was everlasting (Heb.13:20). In the longest Old Testament quotation in the New, the writer to the Hebrews quoted Jeremiah 31:31-34. In making reference to the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah he had a dual concern. First, he sought to show the inferiority of the Mosaic covenant to the new covenant. After quoting Jeremiah he explained, "By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete" (8:13 NIV). In the following chapters he continued to make the contrast between the Mosaic and new covenants in the sphere of sacrifice and its effects, showing that Christ's once for all sacrifice was superior to the repeated Levitical ones (e.g. 10:10-12).[60] Yet clearly the writer did not use

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[60] The aim of this discussion is not to correlate the writer's evaluation of the status of believers under the Mosaic covenant with the Old Testament witness to this. Suffice it to say that the writer to the Hebrews recognized that there were those who were saved in the Mosaic covenant context, as the Old Testament itself recognized. This is the clear implication of Hebrews 11:27-40. Although it is true that the writer stated that the old covenant saints were not

the new covenant prophecy just to demonstrate the inferiority of the old covenant. This Old Testament passage was also presented to show that the salvation of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was operative in the lives of contemporary Christians. In 10:16-17, as a testimony to the completed work of Christ in relationship to those being sanctified, the writer quoted, albeit loosely, the new covenant prophecy. As F. F. Bruce says,

> That the "perfection" of which our author speaks is bound up with the new covenant is made plain by his repetition of the words of Jer.31:33f. and his application of them to the effect of the sacrifice of Christ.[61]

For the writer to the Hebrews, in harmony with the words of Jesus, the new covenant was inaugurated by the work of Christ and operative at his time in the lives of Christians.

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perfected under the Mosaic covenant (7:19; 9:9; 10:1; 11:39-40), this difference with the salvation of believers after Christ should be seen as one of degree rather than of kind. However, a major difficulty in understanding the relationship between Old and New Testaments lies in a proper perception of what the writer said was the nature of the forgiveness under the old covenant and how this correlates with the Old Testament witness. Hobart E. Freeman, in his article "The Problem of the Efficacy of Old Testament Sacrifices," goes a long way towards showing the harmony between the promises of forgiveness under the sacrificial system and the writer's comments on this. Yet Hebrews 10:17-18 appears to imply that the repetitiousness of the Old Testament sacrifices was an indication of lack of forgiveness under the Mosaic covenant. This is a question that deserves further examination.

[61] The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p.241. It appears to be a weakness in the dispensationalist understanding of the significance of the new covenant prophecy as pointing to a yet future covenant to be made with ethnic Israel apart from the church that this use of the prophecy by the writer to the Hebrews was as a testimony to then present and not to future realities (cf. Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, pp.124, 126).

The apostle Paul, in 2 Corinthians 3, also indicated that the new covenant was in force in his time. Although, because of the starkness of its contrast between the Mosaic covenant situation and that of the new, this chapter is difficult to interpret,[62] it is clear that Paul reckons himself and Timothy to be "ministers of a new covenant" (v.6). This covenant was new in relation to the Mosaic, as Paul's contrast throughout the chapter shows. Thus it is most

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[62] By the starkness of the contrast between the Mosaic covenant dispensation and that of the new it might be thought that Paul taught that *none* was saved under the Mosaic covenant. A similar impression might be gained from his epistle to the Galatians (e.g. 3:21-24). If this were so, Paul would be seen as contradicting the Old Testament evidence already presented that new covenant types of experiences were enjoyed by some under the Mosaic covenant (see pages 79-81 above). Yet Paul did recognize that there were those of faith, who were also forgiven, under the Mosaic covenant (see Rom.4:6-8; cf. Ps.32:1-2). This fact must be kept in mind as a fundamental datum in any further examination of Paul's view of the status of those under the Mosaic covenant. A common way of interpreting Paul's statements about the deadening effects of the Mosaic dispensation has been to understand him as focusing on Moses as misrepresented by the legalists he opposed. Thus O. Palmer Robertson, commenting on Paul's different uses of the term "law," says,

> "At . . . points, context seems to demand that the term 'law' be understood as referring specifically to law keeping as a means of justification. In these cases, the term 'law' becomes the equivalent of the Judaizers' misapprehension of the proper role of the law in the history of redemption" (The Christ of the Covenants, p.180).

This method of interpretation follows John Calvin. As A. J. Bandstra points out,

> "Paul, Calvin asserts, in attempt to refute the error of his opponents, 'was sometimes compelled to take the bare law in a narrow sense even though it was otherwise graced with the covenant of adoption' " ("Law and Gospel in Calvin and Paul," in Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin, David E. Holwerda, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p.17).

As Bandstra points out, Calvin did not understand Paul to be refuting the error of Judaizers in his second epistle to the Corinthians. Nevertheless, Calvin still held that Paul in this passage was speaking of law in "a narrow sense," and thus was not denying that those under the Mosaic administration might experience gospel grace (Ibid., pp.31-34).

reasonable to assume that the new covenant he was contrasting with the Mosaic was that of Jeremiah 31:31-34 since in that passage also the contrasting covenant with the new was the Mosaic. This evidence from Paul confirms the understanding gained from the word of institution of the Lord's Supper and from the use of Jeremiah 31:31-34 by the writer to the Hebrews that the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was inaugurated by the work of Christ and has been operative since the New Testament period.

Fulfillment of Obligation

Jeremiah 31:31-34 indicated that Yahweh's people, in the new covenant situation, would live according to Yahweh's will. This was to be because Yahweh's law would be on their heart and was spoken of as "knowing Yahweh."[63] Also, because of this new fulfillment of the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, the promises of the covenants would at last be realized in the experience of Yahweh's people.[64] The New Testament claim was that Yahweh's people, because of the work of Christ, could now obey Yahweh's will and that this meeting of the obligations on their part was to be instrumental in their reception of God's promised blessings.

Jesus called his disciples to a lifestyle in harmony with the will of God. He did not come to do away with Yahweh's law (Matt.5:17). Rather he explained its proper

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[63] See pages 76-77 above.

[64] See pages 110-114.

application at length (e.g. Matt.5-7). He showed that its two main focal points were love to Yahweh and love to the fellow, thus not replacing but reiterating what had been already set out in the law of the Mosaic covenant (Matt.22:37-40; cf. Deut.6:5; Lev.19:18). Yet in his ministry he did not merely present the law anew but also called people to himself with the promise that he would teach them how to live such a new life (Matt.11:28-30). The message of the rest of the New Testament followed the same pattern. Paul in his letters to young Christian churches gave extensive instruction on living according to God's will (e.g. Rom.12:1-15:13; Eph.4-6), while also maintaining that Christians could genuinely follow God's instructions. Christians were ". . . God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works . . . ." (Eph.2:10 NIV). He reminded Titus that ". . . the grace of God . . . teaches us . . . . to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives . . . ." (Tit.2:11-12 NIV). Presupposing that, as Christians, they had a new ability to obey God, he told the Romans that, although ". . . the sinful mind is hostile towards God . . . . (and) does not submit to God's law . . . . if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body you will live . . . ." (Rom.8:7, 13 NIV). Peter also told the Christians to whom he wrote, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of wrong, they may see your good works and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Pet.2:12 NIV). In the same way other New Testament writers not merely called Christians to a way of living that was in accord with Yahweh's

will but expected Christians to respond. John wrote, "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands" 1 Jn.2:3 NIV; cf. Jas.2:14-26; 2 Pet.1:5-11) and added, "No one who is born of God will continue in sin, because God's seed is in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God" (1 Jn.3:9 NIV).[65]

The New Testament writers, as in the Old Testament data considered earlier, pointed to the fulfillment of obligation as the prerequisite for the reception of Yahweh's blessing. They spoke of this in two ways. First, the lack of fulfillment of obligation excluded one from blessing. Jesus, before his exposition of the law of the kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount, had told his disciples ". . . unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt.5:20 NIV). At the conclusion of the Sermon he stressed the same point (7:21-23; cf. 25:41-43). Paul also taught that ". . . the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor.6:10 NIV; cf. Gal.4:19-21). He warned Christians in order that they might not, through unholy living, fail to

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[65] The fact that New Testament writers expected a genuine fulfilling of obligation, a true obedience to Yahweh's will, on the part of Christians should not be understood as indicating that they preached sinless perfectionism. The John who said, "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning" (1 Jn.3:6 NIV), also made it quite clear that believers were not completely free from sin (1:8-10). A distinction between genuine and perfect obedience is helpful here, where the Christian's response to God's will is seen to be the former rather than the latter. With respect to the new covenant experiences of the law being placed on the heart of God's people and their resultant spontaneous obedience, the period from the time of Christ reflects the principle of the "already/not yet." The new covenant is only to be completely operative in the new heaven and the new earth (see Rev.21:1-5a).

receive the blessing of God (1 Cor.10:1-12; cf. Heb.3:16-4:2). In this he agreed with the principle enunciated by the risen Christ, ". . . I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Rev.22:12 NIV) so that those who had not fulfilled the obligations of the relationship would be excluded from the kingdom (v.15). Second, according to the teaching of the New Testament, fulfillment of obligation was to lead to blessing. Jesus also taught in the Sermon on the Mount that the one who would enter the kingdom of God would be the obedient (Matt.7:21; cf. 25:34-36). Paul, too, pointed out that God would not only mete out just judgment on the disobedient but would reward those who did good (Rom.2:6-10). The book of Revelation emphasized repeatedly that those who overcame would gain the future blessings, where "overcoming" is spoken of in the context of being obedient to the will of God (Rev.2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7).

Thus the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles was that the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people were to be and could be fulfilled by those belonging to Jesus Christ. For those who were fulfilling these obligations, and only for such, were the blessings of God promised. In these principles the New Testament message reflected those of the new covenant prophecy in its relationship to the covenant promise complex.

Realization of the Covenant-Promise Complex

Since the New Testament presented the new covenant as inaugurated, it might be expected that the promises of the

covenant-promise complex should also begin to be realized in the experience of Yahweh's people. There is evidence in the New Testament that such was the case. With respect to the promises of a Davidic king, Jesus had come from the house of David (Lk.1:31-33; cf. Rom.1:3) and was proclaimed as present king (Acts 2:34-36; 10:36; 17:7). In terms taken from the Mosaic covenant, Christians were understood to be ". . . a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God . . . ." (1 Pet.2:9 NIV) and, because they were Christ's, were Abraham's offspring (Gal.3:7, 29; cf. Rom.4:16-17). Thus the promised multiplication and blessing of Abraham's family could be seen in the experience of the church. Since the apostles had a ministry bringing reconciliation between God and man (2 Cor.5:18), leading to fellowship with God (6:16; cf. Rom.5:1; 1 Jn.1:3), the fellowship between Yahweh and his people, spoken of in the new covenant prophecy was a present reality. Also, as Jeremiah had pointed to a continuing priesthood, so Christians were spoken of in such terms (1 Pet.2:9; Rev.1:6; 5:10), as was Christ, their high-priest (Heb.6:20; 7:16-17, 23-24).[66] Yet,

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[66] A difficulty remains here in connecting the new Testament statements about priesthood with the promise of the Old Testament. It may be that the term "the Levitical priests" in Jeremiah 33:18 and 21 was used to point out that the priesthood in question was legitimate. J. A. Thompson states,

> "The text here refers to 'the priests, the Levites,' an expression which occurs often in Deuteronomy. The particular way of describing the priests here may be another way of referring to 'legitimate priests' " (Jeremiah, p.602).

While such an explanation allows Christ, and, through him, Christians, to be the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prediction, it does not deal with the more explicit promise to Phinehas in Numbers 25 which appears to be behind Jeremiah's prophesying and which is reflected more clearly in Ezekiel (cf.

although there are these indications that the promises connected with the new covenant were being realized, it is also clear that there was not a full realization of them. Most obviously the promises for the physical security of Yahweh's people and their enjoyment of material well-being were not fully operative. It should not be denied that some physical and material benefits were to be received by Christians. Jesus had told his disciples,

> . . . no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age. . . (Mk.10:29-30 NIV),

but had added, ". . . and with them persecutions . . . .(Mk. 10:29-30 NIV). Physical security was granted to some of God's people (e.g. Peter in Acts 12:3-19), but was limited. For Yahweh's people, the present time was to be one of persecution as Jesus had said (cf. 2 Tim.3:12; Matt.5:11; Rom.8:35, 36). It was only in the future that the promise of peace and security for Yahweh's people would be fully realized Rom.8:18; Rev.21:4). The focus for the full realization of the promises connected with the new covenant, then, was the future, in the last time when Jesus should return. Already the Christians enjoyed the fellowship of being in God's family but the full implications of this would only be known when Jesus appeared (1 Jn.3:2). Their inheritance was not

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Ezek.40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11). Although Jesus may have had some priestly lineage through Mary, a relative of Elizabeth of the tribe of Levi (Lk.1:36; cf. v.4), this is far from certain and, even if so, is not emphasized in the New Testament. Rather, in the book of Hebrews, the fact that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah and <u>not</u> Levi is an important link in the writer's argument for the superiority of the perpetual high-priesthood which Christ exercises (Heb.7:11-14).

obtainable yet but would be revealed then (1 Pet.1:3-4; cf. Rev. 21:1-5a). Thus the realization of the promises connected with the new covenant also exhibited the "already/not yet" tension.

Conclusion

In this chapter the new covenant prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was presented as an integral part of a larger complex of promises for the future of Israel, found mostly in the "Book of Consolation" but also in other sections of Jeremiah. These promises, though having some expansions due to their position in the history of Yahweh's people, were seen to be basically reiterations of the promises of the previous covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David.

The evidence examined suggested that the connection between fulfillment of obligation as the prerequisite for the realization of promise evident before the giving of the new covenant prophecy was also present in the relationship between the terms of the new covenant and the realization of the promises linked with it. Yet, with the new covenant, failure to meet obligation was to be forgiven and the ability to meet obligation was to be given to Israel.

Since the only former promise repeated in the terms of the new covenant was that of fellowship between Yahweh and his people, it was deemed to be the basic promise of the covenant relationship.

The New Testament data presented indicated that, in the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus and the apostles, new

covenant concepts were proclaimed as present realities. This could be so because the new covenant was inaugurated by the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. It was this work of Christ that led to forgiveness of sins and new obedience for the repentant.

Following the new covenant pattern, the New Testament message was that it would only be the obedient who would enjoy the promises of God. These promises were realized in part in the lives of Christians, but their full realization was for the time when Jesus Christ returned. This delay in the full realization of the promises was not reckoned to indicate that the new covenant was not then operative, but only that these realities were influenced by the "already/not yet" principle. The New Testament witness was that from the time of Christ the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 had been operative.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of the separate sections of this study can be found at the end of each chapter. They are expressed in more detail there than in this brief summary. The purpose of this chapter is to draw the different conclusions together into a coherent whole. Then those same conclusions, as relating to the purposes of the study as set out in Chapter I, are presented. Finally some areas for further study are suggested.

Conclusions Summarized

On the basis of the data examined in the preceding study the following conclusions have been drawn. The new covenant was to be Yahweh's instrument to bring to fruition the promises concerning Abraham's offspring which Yahweh had set out in the promissory covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David. The principle governing the realization of these promises had always been that the fulfillment of obligation on the part of Yahweh's people was the prerequisite for the enjoyment of those things promised. In the history of Yahweh's people two things were true. First, the promises

were never obtained because of lack of fulfillment of the obligations on the part of Yahweh's people. There were individuals who fulfilled the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, but the nation as a whole did not. Second, although they were never realized, the promises were never abrogated. They were absolute and unconditional in this respect. Yahweh had stated that Abraham's offspring would receive those things promised. Yahweh declared that Abraham's descendants would recieve them by the means he had set out -- their fulfilling the obligations of the relationship between him and them. The new covenant was to be the means of uniting these two aspects of Yahweh's will for his people.

The new covenant was to be Yahweh's instrument to bring about the fulfillment of the obligations of the Mosaic covenant with which it was contrasted. The Mosaic covenant was an obligatory one. In it the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people were set out in detail. It was failure to fulfill <u>these</u> obligations that precluded realization of the promises of the promissory covenants. The new covenant was not to do away with obligation but to overcome Israel's problem in this respect by providing them the ability to fulfill the obligations of the covenant relationship. This new covenant situation would be based on the permanent forgiveness of any lack of obligation fulfillment on the part of Yahweh's people.

The new covenant was to be established with Yahweh's people after they had suffered the full effects of the covenant curse because of their refusal to fulfill the

obligations set out in the Mosaic covenant, and had come to repentance leading to their forgiveness. This process, by which Israel would come to inherit those things promised, had been revealed before Jeremiah's time. It was presupposed by the new covenant prophecy, which explained it further.

It was the promises which Yahweh had set out in the promissory covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David that the new covenant was to be instrumental in bringing to fruition. These promises of the earlier covenants were reiterated in the book of Jeremiah as those to be realized in Israel's post-exilic future. The most basic promise of the covenants was that of fellowship between Yahweh and his people, which was repeated in the new covenant terms. Thus the promises were connected with the new covenant. When the new covenant should provide the means for the covenant obligations to be met by Yahweh's people, the promises of the promissory covenants could and would then be realized in the experience of those people.

The new covenant was inaugurated in the history of Yahweh's people by the work of Jesus Christ. His sacrificial death for sin provided forgiveness for the repentant. To such new obedience was given and fellowship between them and God established. Thus the new covenant became operative. Also, the promises connected in Jeremiah with the new covenant began to be realized with its inauguration by the work of Christ. This was because the conditions for the realization of the promises were being met in the lives of Yahweh's people. Yet the full realization of the promises awaits the

return of Jesus Christ when the removal of sin from Yahweh's people will be complete.

Conclusions as Related to the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study, as stated in the introductory chapter, has been to seek to understand what Jeremiah said was to be the nature of the new covenant, and especially what was to be new about it. In the light of the study it can be said that, unlike the Mosaic, the new covenant was not an obligatory covenant. All responsibility for the implementation of the new covenant was to rest on Yahweh, the one making it. Yet it also differed from the normal promissory type of covenant as seen in those with Abraham, Phinehas and David. Its establishment was not to be motivated by any outstanding service on the part of the recipients. It was to be a covenant of abundant grace. And, in substance, it was to provide for Israel the means to meet the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people in order that the promises of that relationship might be realized in their experience.

With respect to the new-ness of the new covenant, it has been seen to be new in that it was to internalize the law in Israel, Yahweh's people, and produce spontaneous obedience in them. This new obedience by Israel was to be associated with fellowship between them and Yahweh that would be, by implication, new in its permanence. The new covenant was to rest on a forgiveness that was to be new in that it was to be for an Israel that had justly suffered the covenant curse of

being cast off by Yahweh, and new in that it was to be permanent.

The second purpose of the study has been to seek to understand the significance of this new covenant arrangement for the continuing relevance of the other covenants for Yahweh's people. The data presented has indicated that the new covenant was to be significant for the continuing relevance of the other covenants in two ways. First, it was to provide the means for spontaneous obedience to the obligations of the relationship between Yahweh and his people, which were set out in detail in the Mosaic covenant. Second, it was, by this means, to provide the basis for the realization of the promises of the covenants with Abraham, Phinehas and David. The previous covenants were to find their fullest and ultimate expression in the operation of the new covenant and of the promises associated with it.

Finally, the third purpose of this study has been to seek to understand how the Old Testament data on the nature of the new covenant and its significance for the continuing relevance of the other covenants might be correlated consistently with New Testament data relevant to the new covenant. The study has recognized two things. First the New Testament witnessed to the inauguration of the new covenant in all its aspects by the work of Jesus Christ. Second, the New Testament witnessed to the subsequent enjoyment of the benefits of the promissory covenants (a) already in a preliminary way and limited way; and (b) fully when Jesus Christ returns. Also, it was noted that, although

difficulties of interpretation remain, the New Testament witness agreed with that of the Old that some under the Mosaic covenant participated in new covenant experiences.

It is believed that these conclusions, drawn from this study of the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, give a firm basis for and go much of the way towards explaining the relationship between Old and New Testament and the nature of the salvation experiences of Yahweh's people revealed in both.

Areas for Further Study

Those matters relating to the new covenant which could be studied profitably are many and could include all those suggested by the limitations to the scope of this present study as presented in Chapter I. Three matters raised in the course of the study itself may be mentioned as worthy subjects of some further research.

First, the relationship between regeneration and Yahweh's action of putting the law of the heart of his people deserves examination. It has been maintained in this study that the new covenant, of which the internalization of the law was to be a part, was based on the forgiveness of sins. It has also been maintained that such forgiveness was to follow repentance. It would seem, according to this understanding of the data, that, if the internalization of the law is understood as being at the beginning of God's regenerating work, repentance was to precede regeneration. If this is not acceptable theologically, and it would be difficult for those

of Reformed persuasion to believe that it was, it would appear that the placement of the law on the heart, as well as circumcision of the heart (Deut.30:6) and the giving of the heart of flesh (Ezek.11:19; 36:26) must be recognized as something other than the initial stages of regeneration, although, no doubt, a result of and related to these.

Also, how the covenant with Phinehas was, is being or will be fulfilled deserves attention. Although it is not given as much space in the Old Testament as the covenant with David, that with Phinehas has features in common with it. Besides being covenants of the promissory type, both contained promises relating to the offspring of the recipients of the covenants and to the continuance in official service, whether priestly or kingly, by those offspring. This study has maintained that the terms of both these promissory covenants were reiterated in the covenant-promise complex as amongst those promises to be fulfilled in connection with the new covenant. It has been maintained that, according to the New Testament data, the new covenant has been inaugurated by the work of Christ. There is little difficulty in recognizing the commencement of the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant promises in the person of Jesus Christ, great David's greater son. The fulfillment of the promises to Phinehas, especially as reiterated by Ezekiel (40:46; 43:19; 44:15; 48:11), are not so readily recognized as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ, since there is no indication that he came from the family of Phinehas. Rather the fact of his non-Levitical lineage is stressed (cf. Heb.7:11-14). Examination of this question

should help to clarify further the relationship between Old Testament promise and New Testament fulfillment.

Finally, it can be seen that Jeremiah's focus of attention in the new covenant prophecy was the nation rather than the individual. His concern in that prophecy was not that individuals in the future would experience forgiveness resulting in internalization of Yahweh's law and fellowship with Yahweh. This study has presented data to show that such had existed, and could exist, under the Mosaic covenant. Jeremiah's concern was that this forgiveness and the resultant benefits would be enjoyed by a whole Israel. Thus, an important aspect of the new covenant not examined in detail in this study was to be that a whole Israel, rather than a mere remnant, was to be brought into permanent fellowship with Yahweh. An examination of the new-ness of the new covenant in terms of the extent of its effects rather than concentrating on the internalization of the law, the closeness of the fellowship with Yahweh or the completeness of the forgiveness on which these were based, should open up aspects of the new covenant teaching not usually emphasized.

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